



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

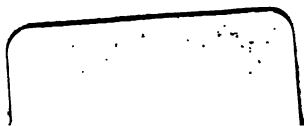


W. PRITCHARD, CARPENTER



6001000108

14000



Anne Pritchard
by her affectionate son
Richard Pritchard
1847.



HOURS OF SADNESS:

OR,

INSTRUCTION AND COMFORT

FOR

THE MOURNER.

Oh, let the accent of each word make known,
We mix the tears of Sion with our own.

QUARLES.

LONDON:

T. M. CRADOCK, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1839.



C. Whittingham, Tooks Court, Chancery Lane.

PREFACE.

THE Compiler, in his visits to the house of mourning, has often had occasion to regret the want of such a little book as that for which he now respectfully solicits the candour and indulgence of the public.

He would observe, that he has not thought it desirable, in any department of the volume, to make many extracts from the same author ; on the contrary, he has been anxious to bring forward a numerous body of witnesses in favour of those all-important, inestimable views of God and of eternity, which alone have power to relieve the burden of the mourner's heart, and to render his sorrow a holy and purifying principle.

As the pangs which are felt upon the dissolution of endearing connections are among the severest, so, if we are but faithful to ourselves, they may prove to be among the most salutary, of our earthly trials.

CONTENTS.

DEVOTIONAL MEDITATIONS.

	Page
The Pilgrimage of Life	<i>Wasse's Devotions</i> .. 1
Praise in Life and in Death	<i>Rev. B. Carpenter</i> . 3
The Benefit of Sickness	<i>Wasse's Devotions</i> .. 5
Death the Lot of all Men	<i>Wasse's Devotions</i> .. 6
Resignation to the Stroke of Death..	<i>Wasse's Devotions</i> .. 8
Hope	<i>Mrs. Barbould</i> ... 10
Christians, the Heirs of Hope	<i>Wasse's Devotions</i> .. 12
Christ, the First Fruits	<i>Rev. J. Grant</i> ... 13
The Last Judgment.....	<i>Wasse's Devotions</i> .. 16
Heaven	<i>Wasse's Devotions</i> .. 18

INSTRUCTIVE AND CONSOLATORY REFLECTIONS.

The Gracious Government of God

Dr. Southwood Smith 20

The Shortness and Uncertainty of

Human Life.....*Dr. Hutton* 23

The Hour of Death.....*Rev. J. Corrie* 26

Reflections on Death

Mr. Foster 31

The Frail and Perishable Nature of

Earthly Objects

Professor Norton .. 34

A Mortal and an Immortal Life.....*Rev. J. Kentish* ... 37

On the Death of an Aged Christian

in Humble Circumstances * * * 41

On the Death of Parents..... *Rev. Sir H. M. Wellwood* 48

On the Death of a Father

Dr. Lindsay 50

On the Death of a Mother

Rev. J. Kenrick ... 56

	Page
On the Death of Children <i>Dr. Lindsay</i>	61
On the Death of a Little Child * * *	68
The End of the Good Man's Pil- grimage..... <i>Dr. Townson</i>	71
The Christian Death-Bed <i>Rev. H. Melvill</i> ...	72
The Resurrection of the Just <i>Dr. Dealtry</i>	72
Immortality <i>Dr. Channing</i>	75
The Re-union of Pious Friends in the Heavenly State..... <i>Rev. Robert Hall</i> ..	78
The Re-union of Pious Friends in the Heavenly State <i>Rev. R. Aspland</i> ..	81
The Intrinsic Authority and Value of the Gospel <i>Christian Examiner</i> ..	88
Christ's Resurrection, a Pledge of a Future Life <i>Dr. Channing</i>	91
The Extinction of Death by Christ... <i>Rev. J. Harris</i> ...	92
Inattention to the Doctrine of a Fu- ture Life <i>Rev. Robert Hall</i> ..	96
Infidelity <i>Dr. Andrew Thomson</i> ..	99
Submission to Divine Providence ... <i>Dr. Longley</i>	103
The Head-Stone <i>Professor Wilson</i> ...	105
The Voice of the Grave <i>Rev. T. Madge</i> ...	112
Remembrance of the Honoured Dead.. <i>Rev. G. Walker</i> ..	117
Love for the Dead <i>Washington Irving</i> ..	120
Neglect of Warnings <i>Dr. Paley</i>	123
Preparation for Heaven <i>Dr. Kaye</i>	126
Christian Watchfulness <i>Rev. T. Ainger</i> ...	129
Domestic Peace and Happiness..... <i>Rev. H. H. Milman</i> ..	133
The Importance of Immediate Re- formation * * *	137
The Dangers of Delay * * *	139

LETTERS.

To a Young Lady, on the Death of a Relation <i>Mr. Foster</i>	142
--	-----

CONTENTS.

vii

	Page
To a Friend, on the Death of his Wife.....	<i>Rev. Robert Hall..</i> 147
To Mr. —, on the Death of his Mother	* * * 151
To Mrs. —, on the Death of her Daughter	* * * 153
To Mr. —, on the Death of his Daughter	* * * 155
To Mr. —, on the awfully Sudden Death of his Brother	* * * 157
To Mr. —, on the Death of his Brother.....	* * * 160
To a Friend, in very Deep Affliction...	<i>Rev. J. Allen ...</i> 163
From Dr. Balfour, after the Death of his only Son	166
From * * *, on the Death of his Father	169

PRAYERS.

On the Loss of Friends by Death....	* * * 171
On the Loss of Friends by Death ...	<i>Compiled Prayers..</i> 175
On the Loss of Friends by Death....	<i>Rev. J. G. Robberds</i> 177
On the Death of a Parent	<i>Rev. John Kenrick.</i> 178
On the Death of a Child	* * * 181

HYMNS, AND OTHER RELIGIOUS POETRY.

God the Life of the Soul.....	<i>Mrs. Steele</i> 183
Praise through Life and in Death ...	<i>Doddridge</i> 184
The Lord our Shepherd	<i>Cottle</i> 185
Pious Friendship	<i>Mrs. Barbauld</i> ... 186
To the Supreme Being	<i>Young</i> 187
The Vanity of Worldly Pleasures ...	<i>Dr. Moore</i> 188
The Shortness of Life ..	<i>Cowley</i> 189
Adversity	<i>Sotheby</i> 189

	Page
Prospect of the Heavenly Jerusalem.. <i>Merrick</i>	190
Declining Age and Death	<i>Rogers</i> 192
The Death of a Christian	<i>Heber</i> 194
The Death of the Young Mother ...	<i>Pollok</i> 194
The Death of an Infant	<i>Mrs. Sigourney</i> ... 196
A Father's Grief	<i>Dale</i> 197
The Death-Bell	<i>Anonymous</i> 199
Where is my Grave ?	<i>Church of Eng. Mag.</i> 200
Written in a Grave-Yard.....	<i>Blackwood's Mag.</i> 202
The Churchyard	<i>Wordsworth</i> 202
Funeral Dirge	<i>Dale</i> 203
The Eternal Shore	<i>Blackwood's Mag.</i> 204
The Sainted Dead	<i>Strong</i> 205
Blessed are the Dead	<i>Mrs. Sigourney</i> ... 205
Sleeping in Jesus	<i>The Amethyst</i> 206
Man Immortal.....	<i>Miss H. M. Williams.</i> 207
Immortal Life	<i>Anonymous</i> 208
Immortality	<i>Dana</i> 209
God the everlasting Light of the	
Blessed	<i>Doddridge</i> 210
Weep for yourselves	<i>Mrs. Sigourney</i> ... 211
Resignation	<i>Norris, of Bemerton</i> 212
Trust in God	<i>Langhorne</i> 213
Unmurmuring Submission	<i>Strong</i> 214
As thy Day is, so shall thy strength	
be	<i>Mrs. Sigourney</i> ... 214

DEVOTIONAL MEDITATIONS.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF LIFE.

[REFORMED DEVOTIONS, BY THE REV. JOSEPH WASSE.]*

RETIRE, O my soul! try thy thoughts; search narrowly, and examine their chief scope and direction.

Where dost thou place thy supreme felicity? and whither tend thy most ardent desires?

Go to the children of this world, the wise, but not for their souls; and learn of them to pursue thine interest.

Do they build in the counties through which they travel? Do they not purchase their estates where they intend to dwell?

* A rare and singularly interesting volume, published in 1719. Mr. Wasse was twenty-seven years Rector of Aynho on the Hill, in Northamptonshire. He was born in 1662 and died in 1738. He is known as the author of several curious literary articles in the Transactions of the Royal Society, and as the critical editor of Sallust. Dr. Bentley used to say that, "when he should be himself dead, Mr. Wasse would be the most learned man in England."

See Whiston's Memoirs, p. 212, and Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, vol. i. p. 263.

And shall they teach and we not be instructed ;
but shall we still go on to build our best hopes on
so sandy a foundation as this perishable earth !

Where our stay can be of no long continuance ;
where we have no security that we shall abide be-
yond the passing moment ?

Rather, having discovered our true end, let us
purchase at any rate the blessed inheritance, and
show our wisdom in the neglect of every thing
beside ;

Every thing that diverts us from our holy course,
or but retards the speed of our advances.

Teach us, O Lord, to use this transitory life as
pilgrims returning to their own home.

What can so nobly enrich an immortal spirit, as
to be daily laying up treasure for eternity ?

What can so highly delight us, as an unceasing
improvement, and a prospect of the continual en-
largement of our hope ?

Through all the dangers and trials of this frail,
this wasting life, our faith shall follow the great, the
glorious Redeemer, and nothing shall cool the fer-
vour of our desire to participate in his happiness.

Why should we fear death, whom the triumphant
Saviour has disarmed him of his sting ? or why, hav-
ing such a Fore-runner, should we shrink from the
dishonour of the grave ?

He has sanctified the tomb into a paradise of rest :
he has made the dark vale of death a passage to a
better life : his hand has unlocked the gates of ever-
lasting bliss.

PRAISE IN LIFE AND IN DEATH.

[REV. BENJAMIN CARPENTER.]*

WE will sing praises to our God, while we have our being.

When we awake in the morning, refreshed with sleep; when we welcome the light of the sun, and go forth to the duties and enjoyments of the day, our voice of thanksgiving shalt thou hear, O Lord.

When we rest from our labour in the evening, and lie down on our bed of peace, then will we call to mind thy care over us, and praise thee, our God, who hast provided sleep for man.

When all nature smiles around us; when the earth is covered with grass, and adorned with flowers; when the valleys stand thick with corn, and the trees are laden with fruits; when the tuneful birds warble their notes in thy praise, and numerous tribes of living creatures exult in thy bounty; we also will join the general song, and adore the riches of thy goodness.

In the barren months of winter, when the fields and groves no longer rejoice, when the feathered choir are no longer heard, and many of thy creatures are buried in forgetfulness; then our souls shall not forget thee, our lips shall not be silent in thy praise.

* Mr. Carpenter died at Old Swinford, Worcestershire, November 23rd, 1816. Aged 64.

When thou fillest our cup with blessings, and causest the voice of health and gladness to be heard in our dwellings ; when our path is pleasant, and our prospects are cheering ; then shall our tongues be employed in extolling thy loving kindness.

And when months of vanity and wearisome nights are appointed unto us ; when dangers encompass our path, and sorrows depress our hearts ; even then will we manifest our submission to thine infinite wisdom. Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines ; though the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields yield no meat ; though the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet will we rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation.

Amidst all the changes of life and the various dispensations of thy providence ; in abundance and in want ; in success and in disappointment ; in health and in sickness ; in all things will we acknowledge and celebrate the goodness which, by useful discipline and trial, conducts us to a blessed and everlasting life.

And in the last solemn scene, when we lie on the bed of death : when our tongues can no longer express our thoughts, and all our bodily powers shall fail ; then it shall be the language of our hearts, Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE BENEFIT OF SICKNESS.

[WASSE'S REFORMED DEVOTIONS.]

COME, let us praise the goodness of God who orders every thing for the best: our life and our death are equally his care.

The Lord casts us down upon the bed of sickness; and draws the curtain between the world and us.

Shutting out all its vain designs; and contracting our business to a little chamber. In that quiet solitude, he speaks to our hearts, and sets our whole life, as in a mirror, before us.

There he discovers to us the treachery of the world, and invites us by the exhibition of its vanity, to prepare for a better.

Thither he sends his messengers of peace to perfect our reconciliation.

Oh! how different are the thoughts of that hour from those of careless unreflecting health!

How do we now censure what we once esteemed! How easily are we led to wiser resolutions!

When our unruly senses are rebuked with pains; and the fears of death teach the rashness of our minds sobriety;

When the occasions of sin are removed from our way, and every thing about us exhorts to repentance;

Adored be thy name, O Lord! whose mercy sanctifies into a blessing even the chastisement of thy rod.

Thou bringest us low to awaken our humility, and prescribest sickness to cure ~~our~~ infirmity.

Thou commandest, and the grave is inexorable, with it is no respect of persons.

Thou tellest us by experience that all must die : but kindly hidest in clouds and darkness the time and place ;

That every where we may be upon our guard, and, through all our days, may be looking for thy summons.

Thou teachest us by the removal of those whom we love to renew the contemplation of our own grave, and the wholesome thoughts of a future world.

Let not, O Lord ! these gracious designs be lost upon us ;

But let such scenes be attended with the most serious reflections upon our own mortality.

And oh ! cause every meditation of this nature to make us the more diligent in preparing for our latter end.

DEATH THE LOT OF ALL MEN.

[WASSE'S REFORMED DEVOTIONS.]

THE time that is past is vanished like a dream, and that which is to come is unenjoyed.

The present moment flies away, never to return.

Already we are dead to the years that we have lived, and we shall never live them over again.

We begin our race in weakness ; and during our whole course, are exposed to innumerable dangers.

If we escape the hazards of childhood, and pass the rash adventures of youth,

Our own superfluous cares deliberately consume us, and the crosses of the world wear out our lives.

If by uncommon success we overcome all these, and still bear up our prosperous head ;

We are sure that at last, old age will find us, and bow down our strength to the grave ;

The grave, from which no privilege can exempt ; the grave which no earthly power can controul.

At its call, the rich leave their wealth ; at its call, beauty and strength inherit corruption.

The busy man must find a time for death, though his full employment spare none to provide for its approach.

This when I consider I tremble and am afraid, since no one can tell how soon he may be called.

To-day, we are in health among our friends, to-morrow we are arrested by the hand of death.

Nature may faintly struggle for a time, but nature must yield at last, and be sown in dishonour.

Perhaps when we are mouldering in the grave, we shall be no more remembered than if we had never been.

Only our faith and our obedience, they will follow, and attend us into the world to come.

Give us eternal rest, O merciful God, and may the light of thy countenance shine upon us for ever !

RESIGNATION TO THE STROKE OF DEATH.

[WASSE'S REFORMED DEVOTIONS.]

WHY do we thus bemoan ourselves, and rashly utter repining words?

Seems it so hard to tread the path which all our fathers have trodden before us?

All these have paid their debt to nature, and subscribed to the universal law.

Jesus himself, the beloved Son of God, went not to his glory, but through the gates of death.

And shall fond self-love flatter us to hope for an exemption from the sentence passed upon all by Him who made us?

Or shall we murmur that our life is but a span, and that it is exposed to sorrows and changes without number?

We must all die; and, if we fall asleep in Jesus, we are happy for ever.

Gracious Father! we confess that thy decrees are just, and that in ourselves is the cause of all the sufferings that we endure.

We too often sacrifice our youth to pleasure and folly, and our manhood to pride and worldliness.

The hoary head spends its hours in brooding over the possessions of the world, and begins not to live till the approach of death;

Then we bewail the shortness of that time which our prodigality has lavished away.

After a life of negligence we complain that death comes upon us unawares.

Our days, perhaps, are too few to make us rich, or to satisfy the ambition of a haughty spirit.

But to be taught our whole duty, requires, not so much a multitude of years, as the faithful endeavours of a pious mind.

Could we bestow on the improvement of our souls the hours that we so vainly spend on trifles, our day would be short enough not to seem tedious, and long enough for us to finish our appointed task.

For what is our business here, but to sow in hope, that hereafter we may reap in joy?

O thou most just and holy God, who governest all things by the counsel of thy will: whose powerful hand can lead down to the grave, and bring back again!

Behold, to thee we bow our heads, and to thee we unreservedly commit our dearest concerns.

Order as thou pleasest our health, and our lives; we cannot be safer than when at thy disposal.

Only these few requests we humbly offer at thy footstool; Oh, may thy clemency vouchsafe to hear them.

Cut us not off in the midst of our folly, nor suffer us to expire with our sins unpardoned;

But make us, Lord, first ready; then receive us unto thyself, in thine own due time.

Give us eternal rest, O merciful God! and may thy glorious light shine upon us for ever!

HOPE.

[MRS. BARBAULD.]

LIFT up thyself, O mourning soul! lift up thyself, raise thine eyes that are wet with tears!

Why are thine eyes wet with tears? why are they bent continually upon the earth? and why dost thou go mourning as one forsaken of thy God?

O thou that toilest ever, and retest not; thou that wishest ever, and art not satisfied; thou that carest ever, and art not 'stablished;

Why dost thou toil and wish? why is thine heart withered with care, and why are thine eyes sunk with watching?

Rest quietly on thy couch, steep thine eyelids in sleep, wrap thyself in sleep as in a garment,—for he careth for thee:

He is with thee, he is about thee, he compasseth thee, he compasseth thee on every side.

The voice of thy Shepherd among the rocks! he calleth thee, he beareth thee tenderly in his arms; he suffereth thee not to stray.

Thy soul is precious in his sight, O child of many hopes!

For he careth for thee in the things which perish, and he hath provided yet better things than those.

Raise thyself, O beloved soul! turn thine eyes from care, and sin, and pain; turn them to the brightness of the heavens, and contemplate thine inherit-

ance ; for thy birthright is in the skies, and thine inheritance amongst the stars of light.

The herds of the pasture sicken and die, they lie down among the clods of the valley, the foot passeth over them ; they are no more. But it is not so with thee.

For the Almighty is the Father of thy spirit, and he hath given thee a portion of his own immortality.

Look around thee, and behold the earth, for it is the gift of thy Father to thee and to thy sons, that they should possess it.

Out of the ground cometh forth food ; the hills are covered with fresh shade ; and the animals, thy subjects, sport among the trees.

Delight thyself in them, for they are good ; and all that thou seest is thine.

But nothing that thou seest is like unto thyself ; thou art not of them, nor shalt thou return to them.

Thou hast a mighty void which they cannot fill ; thou hast an immortal hunger which they cannot satisfy : they cannot nourish, they cannot support, they are not worthy that they should occupy thee.

As the fire which, while it resteth on the hearth, yet sendeth forth sparks continually towards heaven ; so do thou from amidst the world send up fervent thoughts to God.

As the lark, though her nest is on the low ground, as soon as she becometh fledged, poiseth her wings, and finding them strong to bear her through the light air, springeth up aloft, singing as she soars ;

So let thy desires mount swiftly upwards, and thou shalt see the world beneath thy feet.

And be not overwhelmed with many thoughts. Heaven is thine, and God is thine : thou shalt be blessed with everlasting salvation and peace upon thy head for evermore.

CHRISTIANS, THE HEIRS OF HOPE.

[WASSE'S REFORMED DEVOTIONS.]

COMFORT yourselves, O ye faithful, in that ye are heirs of hope ; let no adversity destroy your confidence.

Does our Lord defer a while ?—Expect, and be ready :

He will surely come, he will not tarry.

Wait his leisure ; for, yet a little time, and he will bring relief : He cometh and his reward is with him.

He mercifully stays till our souls are sanctified, and able to bear the splendour of his presence.

Without preparation, who may abide when he appeareth, like the refiner's fire, to judge and purify the earth ?

To the righteous, will he graciously unveil his glories, and our eyes shall see him as he is.

All our great hopes shall be fulfilled in his presence, and our long expectation shall be abundantly rewarded.

We shall remember our afflictions only as the way to felicity ; and the thoughts of our past labours, so recompensed, how will they delight us ?

The delay of our joys shall infinitely improve them, and everything will conspire to perfect our happiness.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercies, hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance in corruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.

CHRIST, THE FIRST FRUITS.

[THE REV. JOHNSON GRANT.]

IN every distressful situation of life, what floods, what torrents of consolation are poured in by this one assurance,—that our Lord is Christ, the first fruits of them that slept!

When sin has brought on its worldly punishment, shame; when the sincere penitent yet meets coldness and distrust on every countenance, and finds himself a lonely wanderer in the world;

What is there, then, but heaven to restore the props of a fallen spirit?

When old age, with its attendants, infirmity and disease, draws on; when early companions have passed away;

When the horizon is narrowed, and the prospect shut in, and all around is darkness ;

When the blossoms of life have faded, and the leaves have dropped off, and the fruit itself, long tried, has become tasteless ;

What is there to turn to, but the hope of an imperishable spring ?

When the child of fair promise, reared with many anxieties and regarded with strong affection, has been suddenly snatched away from your sight, and you have left him in his narrow grave ;

When those whom you were accustomed to venerate and esteem, are gone to their long homes ;

When deep oppression hangs upon the heart, and remembrance broods over the past ;

When in the house and in the way, in solitude and in society, the well known image floats and hovers before your eyes ;

When it will not be excluded ; when it thrusts itself between you and the book you are reading, the conversation you are holding, the train of thought you are pursuing ;

When it draws you back from your occupations, and damps the ordinary enjoyment of life, and binds you to itself with a spell which you cannot break ;

When it returns a thousand and a thousand times, and, like a stream that wears a channel, still makes the impression deeper ;

When the mind is crushed and its manlier powers are weakened, and it abandons itself to sadness, and thinks over many expedients ;

When, still, it is the result of the whole, that all

the physicians in the world, and all the powers of earth, cannot re-illumine the spark of life, cannot for a moment open the eyes you have sealed, and give you back but a wonted smile, or look ;

Oh, what is there then, when the gloom is on the soul—what is there but the gospel of Christ to which it can flee ?

What but the blessed hope of immortality ? what but reliance on Him who can restore the treasure that you have lost, and who wounds only that he may heal ?

Then, indeed, is opened a fountain of consolation, which changes the aspect of the scene.

Faith converts all the pictures of imagination into truth :

It beholds a blooming spirit, beckoning across the great gulf, or walking in bliss, or swelling the songs of the happy, or dressing the bowers of expectation for those whom it has gone before.

How does all repining now melt into confidence !

With what gratitude do you lift the brow to a Being whom you believe to have had some wise end to answer, and to have saved the object of your mourning from the evil to come !

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours ; from their doubts, from their dangers, from their sorrows ;

And they rest from all these in the sure hope of a life to come, of a glorious immortality through Jesus Christ.—Amen.

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

[WASSE'S REFORMED DEVOTIONS.]

THIS life indeed is the way that we must take ;
but this alone cannot bring us to our end.

Before we arrive at our appointed rest, we must
be led through the gate of death.

Then we shall be stripped of all that we possess,
and beyond it we shall carry nothing with us, but
what we are.

Hast thou not seen in the death of a neighbour or
a friend all these circumstances of sorrow ?

Look upon such a case as thine own ; yet a mo-
ment and it may be so ; yet a little while and it must
be so.

Have not we been on the couch of sickness, and
do we remember the thoughts that we then had ?

Our fears of treading the gloomy vale, our deter-
minations to correct our passions, and to strive
against the sins that endangered us ?

It will soon come to this again, and no reprieve
will be found to stay the hand of the destroyer even
for a single moment.

He will come on us like an armed man, and bear
us from the world and from all in it that we have
loved.

After death is the judgment : the day of public
account and restitution :

A day is coming, yea hastening upon all flesh ;
wherein every thought, and word, and deed, all will-

ful omissions, and all broken resolutions shall receive the just recompense of reward.

The voice of the arch-angel and the trump of God shall summon the dead to appear.

The faithful gathered together from the four corners of the earth shall sing, " Let us rejoice, and " lift up our heads, for our Redeemer is nigh : be- " hold he cometh quickly, and his reward is with " him ! "

Lo, our great Redeemer comes in the clouds of heaven, arrayed in the glory and majesty of his Father.

He commands, and the righteous are severed from the wicked : he turns to those on his right hand, with these transporting words :

" Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit " the kingdom prepared for you from the founda- " tion of the world. "

Oh, the unutterable transports of soul which these words of life shall occasion !

But as for the ungodly, it shall not be so with them : the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

HEAVEN.

[WASSE'S REFORMED DEVOTIONS.]

WHY do ye mourn, ye children of light, to whom belong the promises of bliss?

Who taste already the sweetness of hope, and shall hereafter be satisfied with fulness of joy.

What can molest their happy state, whom the God of glory has chosen for himself?

Whom he has adopted into his own family, and designed for heirs of the kingdom of heaven,

That blessed kingdom where all delights abound, and whence sorrow and tears are banished away.

Where none are sick or grow old, or die; but all flourish in health, and vigour, and immortal life.

Where we shall no more be subject to cares, or fear, or change; no more be exposed to the possibility of falling.

Where we shall no more be vexed by others, no more disquieted by our own passions;

But a serene tranquillity shall be within us, and around us shall be joys innumerable.

Joy in the enlarged capacities of our immortal souls:

Joy in the happy society of the virtuous and the glorious company of angels:

Joy in the sight of that Saviour whom we love; joy in blissful union with the most high God.

Behold, the humble shall be highly exalted, and the poor in spirit shall be crowned with majesty.

They who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, shall be recompensed with blessing ; and those that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars.

Then shall we bless the true friend that reproved us, and the charitable hand that assisted our passage to happiness :

We shall bless the rich mercies of our God, and sing aloud the victory of his grace ;

We shall know all that is true, and love all that is good ; and shall delight in that knowledge and that love for ever.

No ignorance shall darken, no error deceive our minds.

No cares shall perplex, no crosses afflict us.

Millions of years shall pass away ; and our glory shall then but seem to begin.

Millions of millions shall pass away, and our glory shall be no nearer to its end.

O sweet reward of a pious life ! O happy sequel of a holy death !

For ever to be free from all that can distress, eternally to enjoy whatever can delight.

Faint not then, my soul ! and we surely shall find a prosperous issue of all our sorrows :

Still let us labour, still let us suffer ; short are our troubles, and our joys eternal.

INSTRUCTIVE AND CONSOLATORY REFLECTIONS.

THE GRACIOUS GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

[DR. SOUTHWOOD SMITH]


WE have abundant reason to rest in the delightful assurance, that of every event which takes place, all the care is taken which perfect wisdom can dictate, and infinite goodness require ; that all its consequences are foreseen and considered ; that its time, its place, its measure, its duration, are all appointed by him who first set in motion the complicated and mighty wheels which bring it round.

Of this sublime truth, which nothing but its great and cheering consequences can lead us to doubt, we may be further assured, by the consideration of the relation which the Creator necessarily bears to his creatures. He is not merely their Creator. By the very act of creation, he unites himself to them by a tie, but feebly represented by that which binds a parent to his child. He is their Father in a much more near and real sense than any human parent is the father of his offspring ; and the best feelings of

earthly parents must be exceeded by his, in the degree in which he is more perfect than they. Yet a good father lives but to labour for the welfare of his family. A tender mother, while she presses her child to her bosom, anxiously considers how she may best avail herself of the situation in which she is placed to advance its happiness; wishes she had the command of circumstances, and could prevent the occurrence of every event capable of endangering its virtue and enjoyment.

This power, so vainly desired by human parents, is possessed by the Universal Parent; and is it possible to believe that he will not exert it for the welfare of his offspring?

No other consideration surely can be necessary to make every intelligent being satisfied with his lot, and resigned to the dispensations which befall him. Many of the events of life, it is true, are deeply afflictive. Often our enjoyments seem given us but to be removed, and even the most secure we hold by an uncertain tenure. The inequalities in health, in the duration of life, in the distribution of property, the prevalence of natural and moral evil in their thousand shapes, sometimes press with such severity upon the mind, as to create, even in the most pious and confiding, a doubt whether a Being of perfect benevolence be indeed seated at the helm of affairs. Our very hearts die within us when sickness and death assail our beloved friends. When the heart on which our image was engraven, and which beat with generous affection for us, is insensible and cold; when in that dark and narrow bed,



from which they cannot arise, sleep a father, a wife, a child, a friend, we feel a sorrow which refuses to be comforted. We dwell upon their excellences with a mournful pleasure. We think of the happy hours we have spent in their society, hours never to return, with a feeling which nearly approaches to despair. *That they are no more*; that they have ceased to think, to feel, to act, at least for us; that that eye which used to gladden at our approach is dark, and can no more beam upon us with tenderness and love; that those lips which have enlightened us with the counsels of wisdom, or soothed our souls with the accents of hallowed and virtuous affection, are silent for ever, no more to solace us in sorrow, no more to excite or to heighten our pleasure: while these thoughts press upon the mind, (and on the loss of our dear and virtuous friends they do incessantly press upon it, sinking it to the dust,) the universe is a blank to us. No longer do we discover any traces of that supreme and unchanging goodness which we had been accustomed to contemplate with delight. But even in these moments of sadness, we must be unjust to ourselves, and to the Author of our mercies, if we are not soon revived by the consciousness of benevolence, to which the severity of anguish may for a while have made us insensible. The privation of our friends, afflictive as it is, is never without benefit to us. It is then we feel that we are born for immortality; that the world is not our home; that we are travelling to a fairer clime: it is then that we enter into religion, and feel its genuine spirit. The same

happy effects are often produced by sickness ; and to the natural and moral disorders which prevail, we owe the production and the growth of the highest excellences of our nature. In a word, an attentive consideration of what are termed the evils of life, enables us to discover so much of the truest benevolence in many of them, as may well induce us to bear with resignation those which we shall not fully comprehend, until it pleases our Heavenly Father to give us clearer light and stronger vision.

THE SHORTNESS AND UNCERTAINTY OF HUMAN LIFE.

[REV. DR. HUTTON.]

OF all that come into the world, it has been calculated that one half go out of it again in the short space of the first seventeen years, and of the other half, it is surely a very small proportion, can we say a hundredth part, that reach the limit assigned by the royal psalmist. Threescore and ten is the patriarchal age of our insect race : him who has attained to it we pronounce full of days, and when he sinks into the tomb, we say of him, that he falls like “ a shock of corn in its season,” ripe for the sickle of the reaper. A life of threescore and ten, or fourscore years, compared with the common life of men, is certainly long ; yet what does the psalmist say— “ It is soon cut off,” he exclaims, “ and we fly away.” “ Thou carriest them away as with a flood,

they are as a sleep; in the morning they are like grass which groweth up: in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth. We spend our years as a tale that is told." It is true, when we compare the longest duration of man with that of Him who "is from everlasting to everlasting," in whose sight "a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night," we cannot but feel that we are short-lived, transient, perishable creatures,—as flowers fading before evening,—as billows rising and falling upon the ocean,—as bubbles appearing and disappearing on the stream,—as the meteor that glances across the heaven,—as the thin cloud that fleets before the storm. Short indeed, yea, momentary is our fleeting day, compared with the everlasting *now* of God; and so far as it may contribute to humble us in the dust before Him, and to teach us that we are insects and atoms, vanity and nothing in the comparison, so far will it be useful to dwell upon this part of the subject.

But there is another view, perhaps of still greater practical importance, in which we may regard our existence, even when most protracted, as short. Life is short, when considered in connection with the number, the magnitude, and the importance of the duties that are to be transacted in it. Consider what we have to do in this fleeting moment of time. We have to serve God,—we have to benefit our fellow creatures,—we have to guide and govern ourselves,—we have, in short, to prepare for eternity. And surely this is no trifling task. Surely it is a

business which may profitably employ every moment of the longest life which God may be pleased to grant.

That life is uncertain, is a truth which needs no long or laboured illustration. Its meaning is clear and simple, and the melancholy proofs by which its certainty is established, daily pass before our eyes. Even now, alas! how many of them crowd our memories with sad thoughts and mournful images! Even now, the beloved friends, to whose sweet and instructive converse we had fondly looked forward, as the delight of future years, the source of many joys, and the solace of many sorrows, have taught us, in the painful parting hour, the mournful lesson, that terrestrial hope is but the baseless fabric of a vision. They have passed away suddenly, and vanished as shadows from our view: our eyes were upon them, and they are not. Unwilling to believe, we look around for them on every side, but in vain;—their favourite haunts are peopled only with ideal images;—the places that knew them but a few hours since, know them no more;—they have left us to sorrow and ourselves,—and all that we can do, is to look up to God for comfort in the hour of bereavement, and to improve their departure, by mournful reflections on the uncertainty of human life, and on the frail and perishable nature of human happiness. Can proofs be wanting that life is uncertain! Surely the assertion will not be made. Suppose that a year since, we had met to determine, or rather conjecture of which of our associates the coming year would probably deprive us; think you that we should have

made the election that God has made? Think you that we should have marked out so noble a prey as he has marked out for himself? Oh, no! our conjectures would doubtless have been altogether fallacious, our selection entirely wrong. We should have assigned to the king of terrors some, perhaps, whom he has not taken, and held back from him, probably, almost all whom he has. Little should we have expected to find, amongst the marks of more than one of his victims, vigorous youth, increasing knowledge, expanding virtue, growing usefulness, rising reputation, fair opening prospects of private, social, and domestic happiness. No! the gloomy monarch does not consult us. He makes his own choice; and we know, too well, that he often crops the fairest flower, and seizes on the pearl of finest water:

“ As death upon his hand turns o’er
The various gems the world displays,
He seizes oft to swell his store
The brightest jewel he surveys.”

THE HOUR OF DEATH.

[REV. JOHN CORRIE, F. R. S.]

DEATH is, in almost all circumstances, an awful and distressing object. The severe sufferings which frequently precede it, the entire change which it produces in our situation, the expectation that it will place us in the more immediate presence of the

holiness and majesty of God, joined with that consciousness of imperfection and of error which the very best of men must feel—generally mingle some painful apprehensions with the purest Christian resignation, and render a manly and becoming death, not a scene of misplaced exultation, but of calm and dignified composure. It has been remarked indeed by a great writer, that “There is no passion in the mind of man, but it mates and masters the fear of death; that revenge triumphs in it; that love slights it; that grief flies to it.”* Nor is this surprising; since it is the nature of violent passion entirely to occupy the thoughts, and to exclude every object but itself. In the absence of any high excitement of the feelings, and where life is estimated at all its worth, and is surrounded with all its charms, we have likewise numerous and animating examples of a cool and noble sense of honour and of duty rising superior to the dread of death. Yet if we admire such conduct as an indication of firmness and dignity of mind, we acknowledge death to be an object which may justly inspire terror. When the victory is glorious, the enemy must have been formidable. But they are not merely selfish terrors that hang round this last enemy of man. It separates us from those whose happiness is dearer to us than our own—from those who may be looking up to us for instruction, for counsel, for protection, for support. To be insensible of what they must suffer, would not

* Bacon's Essays.

be firmness and dignity of mind, but rather a brutal callousness of heart ; and where there is no cause of personal alarm, who would wish to witness without anguish, the last moments of a dying friend ; or to press his chill hand, and gaze on his fixed immoveable features, without experiencing the most solemn emotions ?

The feeling, however, will always be modified by the particular circumstances of the case. When death closes a life of virtuous exertion, guided by just sentiments of religion, and supported by a belief in the infinite mercies of God ; by a conviction that his providence extends through all his works, and that the living and the dead are alike the objects of his merciful regard, we view it as the harbinger of a blessed immortality. Age, too, which blunts the keenness of every feeling ; which gradually loosens all our connections with society, since we can no longer take a part in its active pursuits ; which places us among those whose schemes and prospects, whose habits of thought and action have little sympathy with ours, and makes us in some degree the inhabitants of another world before we are removed from this—to age, when sinking under its infirmities, the grave seems to afford a secure and quiet harbour from the restless storms of life. From the same pitiless and pelting storms, long before time has deadened the capacity for action or for enjoyment, the grave may be a blessed place of refuge for merit withered and blighted by neglect ; for persecuted virtue ; for the anguish of hopeless bodily disease ; and for those sons and daughters of misfortune to

whom the world affords no prospect but that of houseless and friendless indigence. "In the grave the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." In these, and in many other cases, in which we can see nothing good in life, except that it is the gift of a good God—except that it is the path through which the immortal mind of man must move to heaven, death is rather to be welcomed as a friend than to be dreaded as an enemy. And in every case, one stern consolation is afforded by the uncertainty of what is future; for though at an early period, and in the ordinary circumstances, of life, the future may justly take its colouring rather from hope than from fear; yet in the impenetrable gloom that rests upon it, who can tell what severity of misery may be awaiting him? If the Captain of our salvation, pure and holy as he always was, still was "perfected by suffering," who can tell what degree of suffering the wisdom of Almighty God may judge necessary in this probationary state, for a frail and erring creature?

I have mentioned some cases in which we can discern that mercy with which this afflictive dispensation of God's providence is tempered. From the multitude of instances in which we find infinite power and wisdom the ministers of goodness, alike infinite, it is a clear dictate of reason to conclude, and a delightful exercise of faith to believe, that were our capacities adequate to the grandeur of so vast a prospect, we should in every case discover the same gracious exercise of mercy. But the capacity of man is limited, and though it furnishes

matter for astonishment, for admiration, and for gratitude, that his bodily senses should enable him to explore so ample an extent of the material universe, and that the wonderful powers of his mind, aided as they have been by the blessed light of revelation, should qualify him to comprehend, in some faint degree, the great and glorious schemes of Providence ; yet, these, in innumerable instances, must for ever mock the utmost acuteness of human penetration. And we are never more sensible of this than when we see the bright hope and promise of earthly happiness blasted by the stroke of death.

In such a calamity, let the thoughtless and the dilatory hear a warning voice. Sensible as we all are of the frailty of that uncertain tenure by which life is held, our presumption still relies upon the future, and we neglect alike what prudence enjoins for the arrangement of our temporal affairs, and what religion commands as a necessary preparation for the awful solemnities of judgment. The true preparation for death, and for the glorious or tremendous scenes to which it will conduct us, is a life directed by the rules of religion and of virtue. We are not to hope that future blessedness can be purchased by the pangs and fervours of a momentary repentance. Let those, therefore, who have left that undone which conscience tells them should be done, feel in every bereaving dispensation, a motive to rouse them to the earnest and vigorous discharge of all their duties, before they descend into that grave where is "neither working, nor knowledge, nor device."

REFLECTIONS ON DEATH.

[JOHN FOSTER, AUTHOR OF "ESSAYS," ETC.*]

THE records of time are emphatically the history of death. A whole review of the world, from this hour to the age of Adam, is but the vision of an infinite multitude of dying men. During the more quiet intervals, we perceive individuals falling into the dust through all classes and all lands. Then come floods and conflagrations, famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes, and battles, which leave the most crowded and social scenes silent. The human race resemble the withered foliage of a wide forest: while the air is calm, we perceive single leaves scattering here and there from the branches; but sometimes a tempest, or a whirlwind, precipitates thousands in a moment. It is a moderate computation which supposes a hundred thousand millions to have died, since the exit of righteous Abel. Oh! it is true that ruin hath entered the creation of God! that sin has made a breach in that innocence which fenced man round with immortality! and even now the great spoiler is ravaging the world. As mankind have still sunk into the dark gulf of the past, history has given buoyancy to the most wonderful of their achievements and characters, and caused

* "I have read, with the greatest admiration, the *Essays* of Mr. Foster. He is one of the most profound and eloquent writers that England has produced."—Memoirs of Sir James Mackintosh, vol. i. p. 371.

them to float down the stream of time to our own age. It is well; but if, sweeping aside the pomp and deception of life, we could draw from the last hours and death beds of our ancestors, all the illuminations, convictions, and uncontrollable emotions of heart, with which they have quitted it; what a far more affecting history of man should we possess! Behold all the gloomy apartments opening, in which the wicked have died; contemplate first the triumphs of iniquity, and here behold their close; witness the terrific faith, the too late repentance, the prayers suffocated by despair, and the mortal agonies! These once they would not believe, they refused to consider them, they could not allow that the career of crime and pleasure was to end. But now truth, like a blazing star, passing through a midnight sky, darts over the mind, and but shows the way to that "darkness visible," which no light can cheer. Dying wretch! we say in imagination to each of these, Is religion true? Do you believe in a God, and another life, and a retribution? O yes! he answers, and expires! "But the righteous hath hope in his death." Contemplate through the unnumbered saints that have died; the soul, the true and unextinguishable life of man, charmed away from this globe by celestial music, and already respiring the gales of eternity! If we could assemble in one view all the adoring addresses to the Deity, all the declarations of faith in Jesus, all the gratulations of conscience, all the admonitions and benedictions to weeping friends, and all the gleams of opening glory; our souls would burn with the sentiment,

which made the wicked Balaam devout for a moment, and exclaim, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." These revelations of death would be the most emphatic commentary on the revelation of God. What an affecting scene is a dying world! Who is that destroying angel, whom the Eternal has employed to sacrifice all our devoted race? Advancing onward over the whole field of time, he hath smitten the successive crowds of our hosts with death; and to us he now approaches nigh. Some of our friends have trembled, and sickened, and expired, at the signals of his coming; already we hear the thunder of his wings; soon his eye of fire will throw mortal fainting on all our companies; his prodigious form will to us blot out the sun, and his sword sweep us all from the earth, for "the living know that they shall die."

I know not, I wonder how I shall succeed in mental improvement, and especially in religion. O! it is a difficult thing to be a Christian. I feel the necessity of reform through all my soul. When I retire into thought, I find myself environed by a crowd of impressive and awful images: I fix an ardent gaze on Christianity, assuredly the last best gift of Heaven to men; on Jesus, the agent and example of infinite love; on time, as it passes away; on perfection, as it shines beauteous as heaven, and, alas! as remote; on my own beloved soul, which I have injured, and on the unhappy multitude of souls around me; and I ask myself, why do not my passions burn? Why does not zeal arise in mighty wrath, to dash my icy habits in pieces, to scourge me from

indolence into fervid exertion, and to trample all mean sentiments in the dust? At intervals, I feel devotion and benevolence, and a surpassing ardour; but when they are turned towards substantial, laborious operation, they fly, and leave me spiritless amid the iron labour. Still, however, I confide in the efficacy of persevering prayer; and I do hope that the Spirit of the Lord will yet come mightily upon me, and carry me on through toils, and sufferings, and death, to stand in Mount Zion, among the followers of the Lamb.

THE FRAIL AND PERISHABLE NATURE OF EARTHLY OBJECTS.

[PROFESSOR NORTON.]

WHEN the wise and the good are taken from us, we are made to feel the instability of life, and the insecurity of the tenure by which we hold its dearest blessings. But this feeling will be of little value, if it do not lead us to look beyond this world, and if it be not thus connected with a strong sense of the proper business of life, to prepare ourselves for happiness in that world, where there shall be no change but from glory to glory. It will be in vain for us to contemplate a character that we have had reason to admire, if we do not feel that its foundation was in that religion, which teaches every one of us to regard himself as created by God, to be *an image of his own eternity*. It will be in vain for

us to stand by the open grave of departed worth, if no earthly passion grows cool, and no holy purpose gains strength.

We are liable in this world to continual delusion, to a most extravagant over-estimate of the value of its objects. With respect to many of our cares and pursuits, the sentiment expressed in the words of David, must have borne with all its truth and force upon the mind of every considerate man, in some moments at least of serious reflection: "Surely every one walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain." The events of the next month or the next year, often assume in our eyes a most disproportionate importance; and almost exclude from our view all the other infinite variety of concerns and changes, which are to follow in the course of an immortal existence. The whole happiness of our being seems sometimes to be at stake upon the success of a plan, which, when we have grown but a little older, we may regard with indifference. These are subjects on which reason, too commonly, speaks to us in vain. But there is one lesson, that God sometimes gives us, which brings the truth home to our hearts. There is an admonition, which addresses itself directly to our feelings, and before which they bow in humility and tears. We can hardly watch the gradual decay of a man eminent for virtue and talents, and hear him uttering with a voice that will soon be heard no more, the last expressions of piety and holy hope, without feeling that the delusions of life are losing their power over our minds. Its true purposes begin to appear to us in their proper distinctness. We are accompanying one who is about

to take his leave of present objects ; to whom the things of this life merely are no longer of any interest or value. The eye, which is still turned to us with kindness, will, in a few days, be closed for ever. The hand by which ours is still pressed, will be motionless. The affections which are still warm and vivid—they will not perish ; but we shall know nothing of their exercise. We shall be cut off from all expression and return of sympathy. He whom we love is taking leave of us for an undefined period of absence. We are placed with him on the verge between this world and the eternity into which he is entering ; we look before us ; and the objects of the latter rise to view, in all their vast and solemn magnificence.

There is, I well know, an anguish which may preclude this calmness of reflection and hope. Our resolution may be prostrated to the earth ; for he on whom we were accustomed to rely for strength and support, has been taken away. We return to the world, and there is bitterness in all it presents to us ; for every thing bears impressed upon it a remembrance of what we have lost. It has one, and but one, miserable consolation to offer :

“ That anguish will be wearied down, I know.
What pang is permanent with man ? From th’ highest,
As from the vilest thing of every day,
He learns to wean himself. For the strong hours
Conquer him.”

It is a consolation, which offered in this naked and offensive form, we instinctively reject. Our recollections and our sorrows, blended as they are toge-

ther, are far too dear to be parted with upon such terms. But God giveth not as the world giveth. There is a peace which comes from him, and brings healing to the heart. His religion would not have us forget, but cherish, our affections for the dead ; for it makes known to us, that these affections shall be immortal. It gradually takes away the bitterness of our recollections, and changes them into glorious hopes ; for it teaches us to regard the friend who is with us no longer, not as one whom we have lost on earth, but as one whom we shall meet, as an angel, in heaven.

A MORTAL AND AN IMMORTAL LIFE.

[REV. JOHN KENTISH.]

THE gospel of Christ addresses itself not to our curiosity, but to our situation and our wants. Disregarding speculations and opinions, it proclaims facts. The life that is, and the life that is to come, it connects by the all-important doctrine of a resurrection. It considers man as guilty, and informs the penitent believer that he shall be justified, and renewed, and sanctified : it finds him mortal, and promises that he shall be made immortal.

“ We know,” says the great Apostle of the Gentiles, “ that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Let us ask ourselves what are the uses to which

we should apply this triumphant and delightful assurance.

From the picture here drawn of our present frame, we may learn the importance of always preserving a just sense of the frailty of our condition, and of the certainty of our dissolution. Without this feeling we cannot be holy, useful, and happy. To cherish a consciousness of our mortality will prove, it may be hoped, one of the most effectual means of checking our wayward desires, and of inducing us to improve every faculty with which God has blessed us. The ancient Egyptians, we are told,* had a singular custom at the entertainments of the rich: just as the company was about to rise from the repast, a small coffin was carried round, containing a perfect representation of a dead body; and, as it was shown to the guests in rotation, the bearer exclaimed, "Cast your eyes on this figure; after death you yourself will resemble it." Let each of us be his own monitor on this subject; or rather let him point to his own understanding and heart, those admonitions of the kind which Divine Providence frequently delivers. Statedly to call to memory that we inhabit an earthly and dissoluble tabernacle, will, under the blessing of God, make us wise and serious, without overclouding our innocent enjoyments, or interrupting our laudable exertions.

The whole of the Apostle's representation we should employ to the purpose of fortifying our minds against the sicknesses, pains, and sufferings that we meet

* Herodotus, l. ii. c. 78.

with in this life, and the trials that we encounter in the performance of our duty. This benefit Paul himself derived from it; and, as far as the difference of circumstances permits, let us enter into his views and adopt his language: "Though our outward man," says he, "perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day; for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

To reflect upon this contrast between the present and the future life, between our earthly and our heavenly frame, is especially desirable when we are looking forward to the hour of putting off this tabernacle. In these circumstances, it is most of all essential that faith come in to the aid of sense, and that those hopes which render not ashamed have the ascendancy over nature. Blessed be God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, if on solid ground we can say, "we know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The excellent Dr. Leechman was visited in his last illness by a young man of noble family, whom, with a venerable aspect, an animated eye, a distinct though feeble articulation, he addressed in these words: "You see the situation I am in; I have not many days to live, and I am glad you have an opportunity of witnessing the tranquillity of my last moments; but it is not tranquillity and composure alone, it is joy and triumph: it is complete exultation:" his features kindled, his voice rose, as he spoke: "and whence," continued he, "does this exultation spring? From that book, pointing to a

Bible that lay on a little table by his bedside ; from that book, which is too much neglected indeed, but which contains invaluable treasures, treasures of joy and rejoicing ; for it makes us certain that this mortal shall put on immortality.”*

Let this consideration also relieve and comfort us, whenever we are deprived by death of our Christian friends. They still live in the sight of Him to whom the past, the present, and the future are the same ; and, through the grace of God in the gospel, through his mighty power exercised by Jesus, the great agent of his mercy, those mouldering frames shall be clothed upon with a nobler structure ; when “ Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory ;” their mortal tabernacle shall be succeeded by a divine building, a house not made with hands, everlasting in the heavens. They shall rise, no longer earthly and corruptible, but fair and vigorous and immortal forms, with the triumphant anthem on their lips, “ O death ! where is thy sting ? O grave ! where is thy victory ? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We, too, if we be followers of them as they were followers of the Redeemer, shall share in their glory and unite in their hymns of praise. This is rich and seasonable consolation, and it is consolation which copiously flows from the waters of salvation. Thence may we be enabled to take large draughts of vigour and of bliss, whenever we become faint and weary under the burdens which are laid on us during our earthly pilgrimage ! Amen.

* *Memoirs of Dr. Leechman's Life*, by Dr. Wodrow.

ON THE DEATH OF AN AGED CHRISTIAN IN HUMBLE CIRCUMSTANCES.

[* * *]

Say, are ye sure His mercy shall extend
To you so long a span ? Alas ! ye sigh :
Make then, while yet ye may, your God your friend,
And learn with equal ease to sleep or die.

MASON.

IT was not the will of Him who regulates and proportions all his gifts by the rules of infinite wisdom, that our departed sister should be surrounded by the splendours of rank, or wealth, or earthly greatness. Her lot was cast among the tenants of the vale: and never was it more clearly seen that the real enjoyment of life depends less upon outward circumstances than upon the dispositions and feelings of the heart. She knew with what propriety the apostle could say, "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another."* She felt the force and beauty of his exclamation, "This is our rejoicing, even the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, we have had our conversation in the world."†—Amidst inconveniences, privations, and difficulties, her principles displayed their power; producing the fair fruits of virtue, opening inexhaustible sources

* Gal. vi. 4.

† 2 Cor. i. 12.

of consolation, and rendering her humble dwelling the abode of industry, contentment, cheerfulness, and peace.

She was a worshipper of the one true God, through his beloved Son Jesus Christ; and it affords me a mournful pleasure to think on the concern which she manifested for the prosperity of this Christian society—on the regularity with which, while she enjoyed a tolerable degree of health and strength, and even when her great age and increasing weakness would have excused her to others, she took her seat among us—on the holy fervour and animation with which she was wont to celebrate the high praises of her God—and on the unaffected seriousness and candour with which on all occasions she listened to the instructions of this place.

Nor can I refrain from mentioning it to her honour, that she was always early as well as constant in her attendance. So established and perfect was this habit, that I am scarcely able to recollect a single instance of her entering the house of prayer after its services were begun. She was sensible that every duty in which we here engage is an important duty: and she appears, moreover, to have acted upon the maxim which in this respect governed the conduct of a pious and enlightened Christian of her own sex, who, on being asked the reason of her always coming so early to church, wisely said—"It is a part of my religion not to disturb the religion of others."*

For the true and lasting welfare of all the members

• Mrs. Chapone.

of her numerous family, she was tenderly concerned ; in seasons of prosperity warning them of their duty and their danger ; and amidst the visitations of sorrow, pointing out to them their safety, if they would but be faithful to themselves, under the government of a Being whose nature and whose name is Love. As “ Abraham commanded his children and his household after him that they should keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment,”* so she left it in solemn charge with me to urge it upon her children and descendants, as her last request, that when it should please her Heavenly Father to take her from them, and her eye could watch over them no longer, they would continue to cherish a forbearing, mild, and compassionate spirit towards each other, and live together in harmony,—that they would seek their happiness in religion as the only spring of happiness to a frail and sinful creature,—and that they would never, for the sake of pursuing either the business or the amusements of the world, neglect the duties of the Lord’s day, or the ordinances of the Lord’s house. These were her impressive and affecting injunctions entrusted to me, as I beheld her stretched upon her lowly couch in the arms of death. I have fulfilled her wish : and I speak both to your understandings and to your hearts when I say, I persuade myself that now her head is laid in the dust, while you bewail the loss of a venerable and indulgent mother, and a warm and disinterested friend, you will remember, in your struggles between prin-

* Gen. xviii. 19.

ciple and temptation, her dying testimony to the cause of God and goodness.

“Hear her, at least, Oh hear her from the grave!”

Before the close of her earthly sojourn, she was called to pass through scenes of oppressive languor and lingering decay. Her eyes grew dim, and the weight of years pressed heavily upon her. She breathed her prayer,—“Cast me not off in the time of old age: forsake me not when my strength faileth.” “She raised her voice unto the Lord, and he answered: she cried, and he said, Here I am.”* In the calm and sacred retirement of her chamber, secluded as she was from the ordinary occupations and pleasures of society, her thoughts were doubtless often employed in conversing with her Maker and with her own heart—in reviewing with humble and adoring gratitude, the path along which the hand of God had led her—in calling to remembrance the images of those dear companions of her way who had entered into their rest before her—in meditating on the unnumbered blessings that were still spared to her—in reflecting on the vanity of fleeting enjoyments and earthly hopes—in mourning over the infirmities of her nature—in surveying “the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge,”†—and in looking forward to the mighty change which she was soon to undergo.

These are the exercises and contemplations which

* Isaiah lviii. 9.

† Ephes. iii. 18.

alone can support and enliven old age; and these were the holy musings that poured the balm of peace upon her soul, and enabled her, in the near approach of the last awful trying hour, to express her perfect readiness to bid this world adieu, and to depart.

Thus she descended into "the valley of the shadow of death."* The ancients had a proverbial saying, that "it was good to grow old in Sparta;" so severe were the laws in that community against disobedience to parents.† The friend who has been taken from among us, found it good to grow old in Britain—in a land where the gospel of truth and love is proclaimed, and where its holy influence is felt: for, blessed be God! her feeble tottering steps were supported by that filial piety, ever watchful, ever assiduous, than which the eye cannot rest upon an object more attractive,—which always brings with it its own appropriate reward,‡—and which must now be among the sweetest reliefs of sorrow "to those who mourn in Zion."§

* Ps. xxiii. 4.

† It was a common observation among the Jews, that "a child ought rather to labour at the mill, than suffer his parents to want."—" *Vel in pistrino laborare filium debere, ut parentibus subveniat.*" How beautifully does Dr. Ogden express the same noble sentiment! "I do not condescend to mention," says he, "that your parents may be in want; they must not be so while you have any thing, though it were only strength to maintain them by your labour."—*Ogden's Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 133. ed. 1788.

‡ "He that honoureth his father, shall have joy of his own children."—*Ecclus. iii. 5.*

§ Isaiah lxi. 1.

“ Behold the hour cometh when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; and they that hear shall live.”* Then our venerated sister will find it of more avail to have been faithful to her family, and upright and kind to her fellow-creatures ; to have lived in the fear of God and to have sat, like Mary, “ at the feet of Jesus and heard his words,”† than to have shone in the circles of the fashionable and the gay, to have revelled in all the gratifications of pleasure or ambition, to have been “ clothed in purple and fine linen, and to have fared sumptuously every day.”‡

From her example let us learn how respectable and happy old age may be rendered, by giving up the heart in early youth to God. It is religion which can bring to the aged, consolations more cheering than all the enjoyments that time has taken from them, and make “ the desert blossom as the rose.”§ It is religion which, when the leaves are falling and the winter is gathering, can lead the thoughts to those green pastures and those still waters where there is everlasting spring for the holy and the good. It is religion, and religion only, which can disarm death of its terrors, and gild the closing hour with the radiance of immortal glory.

Let those whose shadows lengthen as the day goes down, be desirous of possessing the faith and imitating the patience of our departed sister. Then, amidst the desolations of time and the ravages of the

* John v. 25.

† Luke x. 39.

‡ Luke xvi. 19.

§ Isaiah xxxv. 1.

destroyer, they will feel that they are neither friendless nor alone.

To us, who stately assemble beneath this roof, God has again spoken. Again echoes from the tomb fall upon our ears. Another of our fellow worshippers is gone! Oh! let us think on that day, when in slow and solemn procession our cold remains will be borne along the streets,—when the careless or sympathizing multitude will assemble around the new-made grave, and when the friends who love us will find a vacancy in their home and in their hearts; because “the place that once knew us, knoweth us no more.”* Perhaps that day is near! A few—it may be but a few—more suns shall rise and set, a few more mornings break, a few more evenings spread their shades—and it will be present! Are we endeavouring so to live, as that our dying pillow may be calm and peaceful, that our prospect into an eternal world may be cloudless and happy, that we may leave behind us a claim to fond regret, and that at length “an entrance may be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!”†

“Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching.”‡

* Psalm ciii. 16. † 2 Pet. i. 11. ‡ Luke xii. 37.

ON THE DEATH OF PARENTS.

[REV. SIR HENRY MONCRIEFF WELLWOOD.]

IF we have been the children of worthy and affectionate parents, who are now no more, the remembrance of their love can never cease to be interesting. We have pleasure in believing that we have derived from them our best qualities, or that we can refer to them our success in life. We look back with a melancholy satisfaction on their anxieties for us when we had no care of ourselves; on their solicitude to protect or to warn us; on the affection with which they supplied our want of experience; on the looks of kindness with which they gratified us; on the instruction and the discipline by which they endeavoured to form us for the path of life; on the fervent prayers by which they purified them; on the earnestness with which they spake to us of duties and of godliness, when they admonished us of the evils to come, and strove to fortify or instruct us by "the labour of love;" on the sanguine hopes which they delighted to indulge from the progress of our talents or from good conduct or success in the world, or from our duty and affection to them, or from our fidelity to the God of our fathers.

These are the most useful recollections of the human mind. It is the law of our nature, that the parents go down to the grave, and leave their children behind them. But if we can remember our parents with those happy impressions of their affection and fidelity, we have that from them which will interest

and admonish us as long as we live. If we have been faithful to the influence of parental love, it will never lose its hold upon us.

Why should not each of us examine himself fairly on the subject? Has my conduct been at all worthy of the faithful discipline of my parents; or of their earnest admonitions to guide and to bless my youth; or of the last impressive prayer which came from "the love which perished" in the grave? Do I feel the influence still of parental solicitude, to restrain me in the hour of temptation; or to revive on my conscience my early impressions of godliness and of good works? Or, am I conscious that there is a motive to whatever is pure or estimable, ever returning to my thoughts from the sense of my obligation to justify the hopes, and to be worthy of the examples, which are now no more?

It is consolatory, indeed, to be able to answer these questions to the satisfaction of our own minds. If we give thanks to Heaven that those "whose love has perished," died in faith and patience, and "commanded their children to keep the way of the Lord," we must feel that the impressions, to which these questions relate, are rivetted on our hearts; and that for the influence which they preserve on our conduct, we shall one day answer to God.

Ah! what shall those men do, who know that they deliberately trample on the memorials of parents who loved them in the fear of God? The love which lost its influence before it could avail them, and of which they must feel themselves to have been unworthy, though it perished in the grave, shall rise

up at "the judgment of the great day" to bear witness against them, "except they repent." The thought is deep and awful. If they have any tenderness of mind, and God hath not forsaken them, it will reach the bottom of their hearts.

But it is impossible not to feel how much the recollection of parental love, which recalls us to prayer or to penitence, ought to suggest to other men with regard to the love which has not yet perished. Their parents admonish them still, and pray for them. Surely this is the time to consider how precious the impressions ought to be of God and of duties, which are produced by their earnest and affectionate endeavours to be faithful to God and to them. "My son," said Solomon, "keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother. Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee."

ON THE DEATH OF A FATHER.

[REV. DR. LINDSAY.]

THE first feelings which rise in a good heart, on the loss of a father who has lived and died in Christ, are feelings of grief. These will be more or less acute, according to the circumstances of the case, and the sensibility of the mourner. But they will be

experienced, in some degree or other, by every son and every daughter, who acknowledges the ties of nature or religion. Those who have long been the objects of our respect and affection cannot be lost, in any circumstances, without some meltings of sorrow. A thousand tender recollections come crowding upon us, which to a generous heart are irresistible. "He is gone, who laboured for our sustenance, who watched for our safety, who studied for our improvement, who prayed for our success, who lived for our happiness. And shall he go without the tribute of a tear? without any memorial of that gratitude and love, upon which he had so many urgent claims? Could I ever again look up to Heaven with those eyes that refused to weep over the ashes of a father? Or will God continue to regard me as his child, if I am a stranger to those emotions, which are the surest indications of filial duty?"

Such sentiments are congenial to every well-regulated mind. They are felt, even when a father is taken from us in circumstances of infirmity and pain, the continuance of which would render enjoyment hopeless to him, and be to us a source of perpetual anxiety. This, however, is a tone of grief which softens, without oppressing the heart; which inclines it to a devout acquiescence in the appointments of Divine wisdom, and prepares it for those reflections upon Providence and futurity, by which all its best affections are encouraged and invigorated.

But how much is filial sorrow deepened, where a father is cut off in the midst of strength and usefulness, whilst his children were cherishing the fond

expectation of being introduced into life under his paternal protection, and nursed into virtue by his counsels and example ! Here the tears of affection are embittered by the feeling of personal destitution ; by the pang of disappointed hope ; and by all those nameless apprehensions of future evil, which force themselves upon the trembling fancy in this season of his distress.

In such circumstances, the desponding orphan is ready to exclaim in anguish of soul, " My father, where is he, and where am I without him ? Left in an unpropitious world, at a dangerous age, without experience, and without a guide, to struggle with difficulty, to become the sport of chance, and the child of misery ! "

Thus speaks the heart, in the first moments of its deprivation. But pause, O mourner ! and ask again, " My father, where is he ? " Not surely in the land of everlasting forgetfulness. Was he not a Christian ? Has he not died in faith ? and though absent from the body, is he not present with the Lord ? You despair not of his happiness ; why should you despair of your own safety ? Have you forgotten those sources of consolation, to which he directed you, amidst the evils of mortality ? Did you never hear from his lips those lessons of resignation, which he had himself learnt in the school of Christ ? If he could now address you, would not the purport of his exhortation be, " Cease, my child, to arraign the wisdom, or distrust the goodness of that God, whose dispensations, even when they seem to be most grievous, are all mercy and truth to those that love him.

He is the Father of the fatherless, and the Friend of the destitute. He has deprived you of my protection, that you may feel more sensibly the value of his own. The visitation, for the present, may wear an aspect of severity ; but be assured, it has some gracious aim, which can fail only through your neglect. It calls you early to the exercise of patience and fortitude ; virtues incalculably important to the great ends of life. It impresses upon you the necessity of exerting your own reflection for the regulation of your own conduct, and of putting forth all the powers of your minds in overcoming the difficulties of your situation. View it thus, and take courage from the example of those who, in similar circumstances, have done valiantly. Trust in God, and quit yourself like a man. Your fathers in the flesh can no longer watch for your safety. But, whilst you rely for support and direction upon the Father of your spirits, he will never leave nor forsake you. Seek your comfort, your encouragement, from the promises and the example of Him, who was himself made perfect by suffering. Then, though you may still sorrow, as a dutiful child, you will no longer sorrow ‘ as those who have no hope.’ You will rejoice even in tribulation, and anticipate the happiness of that glorious day, when I shall welcome you, with all the warmth of paternal love, into the regions of everlasting peace !”

Such, if he could speak from the tomb, would be the advice and the encouragement of a pious father. And when such sentiments occur to the mind of an affectionate child, they will minister comfort, and restore it to composure. Thus will it be gradually

prepared for recollecting, with a mixture of satisfaction and regret, the amiable qualities of heart and character, by which a parent has been distinguished in life ; and for which his memory will be honoured in his family, and respected in his neighbourhood.

If our fathers have filled with credit that station, high or low, in which the providence of God had placed them ; if they leave behind them this legacy of domestic worth and of Christian graces, let us, without envying the posthumous honours of the great, regard it as a gift of inestimable value, and cherish the memory of those who bequeath it. Whatever the vain and the worldly-minded may think, it is better than gold, yea, than much fine gold. For gold may minister to vice ; but the memory of the just is blessed to their children, because it becomes an incentive to all that is virtuous and praiseworthy.

How indeed is it possible to review the character of an honoured parent, without breathing forth an ardent prayer, that we may be like him in holiness ! And such a prayer, often breathed in those moments when recollection is strong, will invigorate every effort to attain the resemblance which we so much desire. Viewing the virtues of our house, as its true glory, we shall resolve to preserve them as a sacred deposit, or we shall feel the yet more honourable ambition of transmitting them to our posterity augmented and improved.

On the other hand, we shall blush at the very thought of sullyng the family inheritance ourselves, and thus setting an example, which may tend to sully it still more in those who succeed us. What, indeed,

can be so disgraceful, as by neglect, or by perversity, to interrupt the regular descent of those Christian endowments, which are the ornament of the rational nature, and the only foundation of permanent renown? And what grosser insult can be offered to the memory of a father, than to despise his lessons of piety, and to renounce those principles which conducted him to immortality? He who can think for a moment, of meeting a father thus insulted, at the great day of retribution, without a mixture of shame and horror, has lost all that is ingenuous in the character of a son.

But whilst the loss of a parent leads to a general review of those estimable qualities by which he was distinguished, it will give a more particular interest to the remembrance of those cares and attentions, to which we are indebted, in a great measure, for every advantage that we now enjoy, and every hope that we are permitted to indulge. Is it possible to look back upon that paternal solicitude which watched over the safety of our helpless years, and studied the improvement of our opening minds; that solicitude, which fear excited, and which hope relieved; which prompted so many labours, and interrupted so many pleasures; is it possible to think of this, without feeling, in all its force, that debt of gratitude and respect which we owe to the memory of an indulgent father?

“ Our fathers, where are they ?” He who brought life and immortality to light resolves the question. “ Ye believe in God, believe also in me. I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also.”

Here is an assurance, which takes from filial sorrow all that is bitter, and leaves only what is soothing and instructive. By this assurance we are enabled to anticipate a glorious entrance into that place where paternal affection will retain its ardour, but lose its solicitude; where pious children will hail, in transports of gratitude, those venerated names, by whose counsels they were led into the ways of righteousness; where the errors of parental fondness, and the defects of filial obedience, with all the little jarrings of an imperfect state, will be for ever at an end.

ON THE DEATH OF A MOTHER.

[REV. JOHN KENRICK.]

THE memory of a virtuous mother is blessed by her children, when they call to mind what they owe to her care, in the formation of their habits, and the discipline of their tempers. As the parental relation is the first in which the human being discovers himself to stand, and serves to give him his first imperfect notions of duty and dependence, so it is more especially to the mother, that Providence has intrusted the task of drawing out those religious and moral powers which human nature contains within itself. She sees, if her observation and her watchfulness are quickened by genuine maternal tenderness, the passions, one by one, awakening in the infant breast; the trains of feeling and the associations

of thought, beginning to link themselves more firmly together, till they become fixed and unchangeable habits. In that filial love, which is the requital of the maternal, those affections have their origin, which, as they spread wider and higher, ascend ultimately to the First Cause and Fountain of all good. How holy is the office of a mother, employed in instilling into her children's minds the first principles of religious knowledge and duty! At her feet their little hands are clasped together, in the first aspiration which they venture to raise towards their Father who is in Heaven. She teaches them to connect the idea of his power and skill, with all those vast or curious objects around them, which impress their minds with awe or wonder; his love, with those beauties of nature amidst which they delight themselves, and every source of joy which gladdens their hearts. Adapting her instructions to the progressive enlargement of their powers of conception, she leads them to the knowledge of him, as the moral governor of his creatures, the punisher of all the workers of iniquity, the rewarder of all those that diligently seek and obey him. The narratives of Scripture, beautiful in their divine simplicity, are employed to touch their hearts with admiration of the virtues displayed by the good of past ages; its hymns of thanksgiving and praise store their youthful memories; the life, the precepts, and the sufferings of Him, who forbade not "little children to come unto him," but declared that "of such is the kingdom of heaven," prepare the way for the knowledge of those evidences, which establish his claim to be the Son of God.

With what vigilant assiduity does the virtuous mother watch the first disclosure of the selfish passions in her offspring's mind! how careful is she to eradicate them, before they grow to such a height, as to overshadow and stifle their better principles! She teaches them not eagerly to contend for the mastery over each other, but in honour each to prefer the other to himself; she shows them, she makes them feel, the loveliness of mutual kindness and mutual forgiveness: she reconciles their little animosities, gently softens down the stubbornness of pride, and shows them how good and how pleasant a thing it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity. If passions of a darker hue, and habits of greater obstinacy, require that pain should be inflicted upon the offender, what a mixture of tenderness with just severity, in a mother's chastisement, and a mother's rebukes! Gladly would she take upon herself, even a double measure of the pain which she inflicts, if such a substitution could restore her children to virtue; but if no other remedy remains, she shrinks not even from this bitter trial of her affection. Yet mindful of the apostolic precept, she "provoketh not her children to wrath," by any reproachful bitterness of language or violence of manner. She shows, even to a child's apprehension, that a painful sense of duty alone compels her to punish an offence, which if allowed to pass unchastised, might endanger its present and everlasting welfare: she hails the first symptom of returning goodness with delight, and the sunshine of her smile raises and cheers the head, that had hung drooping in sorrow beneath her reproof.

These duties are not, it is true, the exclusive office of the mother. They are the joint obligation of both parents : they cannot be fulfilled with effect, unless both conspire to pursue a similar course of discipline towards their children, unless they support each other's authority, and co-operate in all their undertakings. But it is evident that to the mother by far the larger share must belong, in carrying into effect those principles, which are equally sacred and important in the eyes of both. Her presence with her children is constant ; the whole of their little history goes on beneath her inspection ; and as the larger portion of the anxiety and toil of the earliest education devolves on her, so wherever the influence of affection is to be exerted, the gentleness of female virtue gives her a power over the heart which no one else possesses.

The memory of a virtuous mother is, also, blessed by her children, because all her precepts are crowned and illustrated by her example. If this were wanting, the probability would be, that that spring of virtuous principle did not exist in the breast, which is necessary to prompt to all the painful and self-denying exertions, which I have described as being endured by virtuous maternal love. Or if, by an inconsistency which is not without example, there should be found one, who desires the virtue of her offspring, while she herself neglects its injunctions, the illusion could be kept up only for a very short time. The curious and inquisitive eye, even of childhood, would soon penetrate the disguise, and detect the difference between the lessons and the practice

of its parent. Those only whose life has nothing in it which they wish to keep from their children's observation, can cultivate that unreserved confidence with them, which ought ever to prevail in this connexion. While a bad example thus defeats the purpose of the most eloquent instructions, a good example not only enforces them, by a perpetual, though imperceptible influence, but supplies many deficiencies which must still remain when instruction thinks that its work is completed. Example shows, that the virtues which precept has enjoined, may be cultivated and attained: the finer proprieties of conduct, the graces of manner, which are then only to be thought of little value when they are the substitute, instead of the ornament of real virtue, can scarcely be made intelligible, except in the living model. No rules can reach the thousand emergencies and circumstances of life; it is by associating constantly with those whose principles are pure, whose judgments are correct, that the mind, observing, reflecting on, and insensibly imitating them, learns to prepare itself for acting, when placed in similar circumstances. Such an example a virtuous mother holds up to her children, and for the possession of such an advantage, they justly "arise up, and call her blessed." They call her blessed while she yet remains among them, and they feel the happiness which she diffuses over the circle in which they move together: even in the moment when she is taken from them, they bless her, that she leaves them a bright example to follow, a train of soothing and delightful reflections, and a treasure of glorious hopes. They will renew

their blessings, in accents no longer broken and subdued by sorrow, when, meeting her before the throne of mercy, they rejoice, "no wanderer lost, a family in Heaven."

ON THE DEATH OF CHILDREN.

[REV. DR. LINDSAY.]


DAVID was a mourner in Zion; a man accustomed both in joy and grief to look above the world. If his favourite son had been undutiful to himself alone, he might have borne his loss with decent composure. His life would have been less guilty, his death less awful. But how wretched for a father to recollect, that he had died an outcast from God, as well as from man, with all his sins upon his head, unrepented of, and therefore unforgiven! He had raised but one rebellion against his father on earth: his conduct had been a continued rebellion against his Father in heaven. Deaf to the calls of filial duty, he was yet more deaf to those of pious gratitude; and whilst he defied, in arms, the authority of his king, he braved with more dreadful audacity, the power and vengeance of his God. What portion, then, could a weeping father expect for such a son, in that loving-kindness, which is better than life? What but the most awful forebodings could occupy his desolate breast? "And is it thus, O Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! is it come to this, that I thy father, who contemplated thy early bloom with ineffable delight; who expected from

thy riper years so much to bless the world, so much to soothe my own declining age, and to uphold the cause of God and truth, when I should have been gathered to my fathers,—is it come to this, that I, whose very soul lived in thine, should see thee die a rebel to myself, yet worse, an outcast from that heaven, which thy crimes have forfeited! O Absalom, my son! is this the end of all my anxious cares, of all my unbounded indulgence, of all my flattering hopes! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son! for then mightest thou have lived to think and to repent, and I might yet have greeted thee with more than paternal joy in the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem.”

If ever excess of sorrow were lawful, this is the ground on which it might be justified. To think concerning his beloved son, thus hurried by his wickedness to an untimely grave, that he could cherish no reasonable hope of future union; that those sweet anticipations of the heart, which nature suggests, which religion confirms, and which bring sweet solace to the bosom of a parent, when every other consolation fails;—to think that these were lost for ever with respect to Absalom, was of all thoughts the most agonizing to the feelings of a pious father; and it accounts full well for those unavailing lamentations, which he pours from his bosom with a pathos so deep, an anguish of soul so bitter and so persevering.

Ye children of religious parents, who have listened to these observations, suffer them not to pass from your minds without practical improvement.

Look to Absalom : and if you see in his character every thing, which as men you ought to abhor ; and in his end, every thing, which as Christians you ought to dread, remember this history was written for your instruction. Learn from an example so awful, to check the first approaches to that licentious indulgence, which, in its progress, seldom fails to undermine the principle of filial duty. Learn to counteract the very first motions of an undutiful and rebellious temper, lest, in gathering strength, they should lead to atrocities, at the very thought of which, your souls would now revolt. No man ever became an Absalom at once. But when the ties of filial duty are broken in one instance, you may soon be tempted to a second transgression : and if you once lose the fear of wounding a parent's feelings, in things of inferior moment, you may come imperceptibly to disregard them, in those matters which more deeply concern both him and yourselves. You cannot be charged with any thing that bears even a distant resemblance to the guilt of Absalom. God forbid you ever should ! If I know any thing of your present feelings, not all the thrones of Europe, not all the pleasures which the union of wealth and power could purchase, could tempt you, either in life or death, to plant such daggers in that bosom, into which you are bound, by all the ties of nature and religion, to pour the sweetest balm of filial affection. What ! would you hazard, for any temporary indulgence, the awful possibility of leaving the world, your souls weighed down and agitated, with the consciousness of embittering the grief of



your parents by an unhallowed and a hopeless end? You shrink with horror from the very idea. Keep then at a distance from every temptation, that might excite their uneasiness for the present, or their apprehension for the future. Your youth does not secure you from the shafts of death. You know not how speedily, how unexpectedly, these shafts may reach you. Is it not then the desire of your heart, that in living to God and virtue your latter end may be peace? nay, that you may not only be safe yourselves, but that those who have the deepest interest in your safety may be comforted for your loss by the assurance, that they shall meet you spotless and without rebuke, in that world, where nothing can occur either to diminish affection or to interrupt enjoyment?

Children should be warned and awed by the profligacy and the end of Absalom. Parents should learn wisdom from the fondness and the grief of David. If they would escape those feelings of anguish, which he experienced, they must avoid that partiality and that excess of indulgence, which are so apt to nourish the baneful weeds of arrogance and obstinacy. They must guard with care against those dangerous predilections, which a comely form and winning manners insensibly awaken. Children possessing these qualities, are even without encouragement, too prone to self-conceit. But, if they once perceive, that such qualities excite vanity and produce favouritism, in a parent, the mischief is infinitely aggravated. For it requires more humility and more wisdom than fall to the share of the young,

to resist that pride of heart, which such a discovery tends to foster, or to refrain from the abuse of that indulgence, which such partiality encourages them to expect. Therefore whenever you feel this partiality growing, and are tempted by it to concede too much to the demands of youthful passions, think of David's bitter tears, and check the impulses of that excessive fondness, which, though amiable in its source, too often becomes dreadful in its consequences. Counteract the weakness of nature both in yourselves and your children, in the only way in which it can be counteracted with effect. Invigorate by precept and example, those principles of religion which are the only sure check upon the growth of evil inclinations; which being once deeply rooted in the mind, will render the parent cautious, the child submissive and affectionate, and both anxious, that by living to God and goodness here, they may live together, with God and good men hereafter. Be our love to our children ever so tender, if it look not to this great result, it fails in its most important office; and if, through the want of religious and moral culture on our part, there should be on theirs a want of that faith and holiness, without which no man can see the Lord, how would the thought embitter our sorrow in those moments of deprivation and affliction, which every parent may expect to see! For let us not vainly suppose, that our children are given us as a permanent possession. All of them may, and some of them probably will, be carried to an early grave. Happy they, and happy we, if instead of mourning over them with hopeless

despondency, as David did over Absalom, we can sweeten the cup of sorrow with the cheering cordial of Christian hope! Happy, if we lament not the untimely fate of the debauched, the rebellious, the profane; but that early worth, that filial tenderness, that unspotted purity, which gave the promise of excellence in this world, and is gone uncorrupted to that place, where the seed, thus sown, will bear fruit an hundred fold. Have you lost such children, young, virtuous, amiable? Nature bids you weep, and let the voice of nature be obeyed. I like neither the philosophy which forbids tears, nor the over-refinement which is too much afraid of exciting them. They are at once the dictate and the relief of sorrow. And when the Saviour has wiped them away by his great and precious promises, we are enabled to say, in the composure of resignation, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul; why art thou disquieted within me? Trust in the Lord, and return to thy rest. The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

Be this the language of those who now mourn in Zion. Your loss may be great, your affliction may be deep; but how readily would David have parted with his crown for such a grief, accompanied with such consolations! You have lost a child; but, blessed be God, you have not lost an Absalom—not a child snatched from you with rebellion in his heart and impious arms in his hands; but a child affectionate and good, whose dying bed has been tended and soothed by maternal affection, and who is now lamented for the loss of early virtue, not from

any apprehension about his future happiness. Whilst, therefore, we shed the tear of a reasonable regret, let us be thankful to God, that religion does not call forth the bitter tears of an awful despair. The desire of our eyes is taken from us ; let us rejoice that there is no darkness, nor shadow of death, which can take from the eye of faith those visions of future glory which reconcile the heart to all the dispensations of heaven, and to all the troubles of our weary pilgrimage. If the young have escaped from these troubles before us, why should we envy them this happy preference ? They are with Christ. Let us follow them in faith, desire, and expectation. Let the experience of disappointed fondness teach us to moderate even our innocent attachments ; and let every attachment be kept subordinate to that duty which we owe to God, and that preparation for heaven which we owe to ourselves. As children, let us cherish filial love ; it is the best image of piety, and the first step to the practice of all the social virtues. Let us think of our latter end ; it is probably very near. Are we endeavouring so to live that it may be peaceful and happy ? that we may leave among our friends no regrets of which virtue needs to be ashamed ; no grief but that which nature prompts, and which religion may approve ? As parents, let us bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord : then, if they live, they will live with usefulness and reputation ; and if they die, we shall be comforted with the assurance, that they sleep in Christ, and will appear among those, whom Christ shall bring with him to the mansions of eternal rest.

ON THE DEATH OF A LITTLE CHILD.

[* * *]

“ The less of this cold world, the more of heaven,
The briefer life, the earlier immortality.”

MILMAN.

THE visits of Death, at whatever hour and under whatever aspect he presents himself, are always solemn. Where is the man who can follow even an infant to its grave, without feeling his compassion moved? Where is the human being who can see a little child carried to the house appointed for all the living, and not be melted into tenderness?

Clouds and darkness are round the throne of God; his ways are often past finding out; yet of this we may be assured, that, whether he withholds or gives, whether he refuses or bestows, his determinations are founded in wisdom and righteousness and mercy.

On a cursory view, it seems to be among the appointments of his providence, which serve but to astonish and confound, that any of his rational creatures should be born only to breathe, and weep, and die; and that children should be compelled to close their eyes upon the world before their faculties can be developed,—just when their sportive innocence and their broken accents of affection are beginning to repay the cares, and more than ever to engage

the hearts, of those who have the deepest concern in their welfare. We can hardly resist our inclination to ask, why they were not permitted to attain to years of reason and understanding? and why all the pleasing expectations with which the Author of our frame has gladdened a parent's bosom, should be dashed in a moment to the earth? God alone can judge of times and seasons; and to his will it is always our interest as well as our duty to bow with awed and unquestioning submission: "Even so, Father! for so it seemeth good in thy sight!"

In the present instance, however, we shall perhaps, on maturer reflection, discern enough to satisfy our doubts, and to confirm our faith. Had it pleased the Dispenser of our circumstances to arrest the progress of disease, and to raise the little sufferer from her couch, those feelings of nature, which prompted such unceasing efforts for the restoration of her health and strength, would assuredly have been kindled into devout gratitude,—would have been quick to acknowledge, and assiduous to improve, the rich, the inestimable blessing. Yet who can tell what trials might have awaited her in the further progress of her days? Who can describe the pains and languors of which she might have been the victim? Who can say with what temptations God might have seen fit to visit her? or through what thorny and rugged paths she might have been called to pass?

Nor is this all. There are brighter beams of light and consolation to which the mourner in Zion may open his darkened and sorrowing spirit. "It is

not the will of your Heavenly Father that one of these little ones should perish." They sleep in Christ; and will appear among those whom Christ shall bring with him, at the last day, to the eternal mansions of his Father's house. You can accompany their angel-forms in your imagination, to a better and a happier world, where the Saviour, who while on earth "suffered the little children to come unto him and forbade them not," will gather the lambs into his bosom, and cast around them the arms of his love. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." In the paradise of God, and around the tree of life, these plants will again unfold their blossoms, beneath the radiance of an undeclining sun, and bring forth fruits unto immortality. Possessing this assurance, "let us be patient in tribulation, and rejoice in hope."

And oh! how blessed beyond all bliss will be the pious and affectionate parent when he shall meet his long-lost children, after the separation of the tomb, "in the effulgence of the uncreated and immortal light!" He will then discover that his love for them has not been in vain. He will then find that the tenderness with which he listened to their cries, and the anxious solicitude with which he hung over their sick and dying pillow, have not been forgotten. They are all written in the book of God's remembrance; and joyful will be the remembrance in that day when the book is opened.

Happy they who instead of mourning in gloomy and hopeless despair, can solace their hearts with these great and precious promises! Let our fervent

prayers ascend to the God of peace, that he would fill us with all peace and joy in believing, and preserve us blameless and without rebuke to the coming of our Lord. Amen.

THE END OF THE GOOD MAN'S PILGRIMAGE.

[REV. DR. TOWNSON.]

WE read that in certain climates of the world, the gales that spring from the land carry a refreshing smell out to sea, and assure the watchful pilot that he is approaching a desirable and fruitful coast, when as yet he cannot discern it with his eyes. And, to take up, once more, the comparison of life to a voyage, in like manner it fares with those who have steadily and religiously pursued the course which heaven pointed out to them. We shall sometimes find by their conversation, towards the end of their days, that they are filled with hope, and peace, and joy ; which, like those refreshing gales and reviving odours to the seaman, are breathed forth from Paradise upon their souls, and give them to understand, with certainty, that God is bringing them unto their desired haven.

THE CHRISTIAN DEATH-BED.

[REV. HENRY MELVILL.]

WE look not always for triumph and rapture in the death-bed of the righteous. But if there be not ecstasy, there is often that composedness in departing believers, which shews that the “everlasting arms” are under them and around them. It is a beautiful thing to see a Christian die. The confession, while there is strength to articulate, that God is faithful to his promises, the faint pressure of the hand, giving the same testimony, when the tongue can no longer do its office; the motion of the lips, inducing you to bend down, so that you catch broken syllables of expressions such as this,—“Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;” these make the chamber in which the righteous die one of the most privileged scenes upon earth, and he who can be present, and gather no assurance that death is fettered and manacled, even while grasping the believer, must be either inaccessible to moral evidence, or insensible to the most heart-touching appeal.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST.

[REV. DR. DEALTRY.]

TO a mind which is disposed to serious meditation, how many subjects of deep interest are suggested by the condition and destiny of man! If we look back for a few years, not one of the many

millions who at this day inhabit the earth, had been called into being: the world was to us as if it existed not; and after the lapse of a very few years, another race will have succeeded, and we shall have passed into that invisible region to which so many generations had been carried before us. While we look upon the scene around us, it is every day changing before our eyes; many of those with whom we formerly took counsel together, and some perhaps who were most dear to our affections, have gone to the house appointed for all living. And what then has become of them? Has the principle of life been destroyed with the corruptible body? Has the body itself perished in the grave? and is nothing left for us but to contemplate, with sad or even hopeless forebodings, the dark night of futurity? The gospel invites us to better contemplations; it rolls back that thick mist which hangs over the tomb, and tells of life and immortality in the regions beyond it. It bids us extend our views to the day which is emphatically called "the day of the Lord;" it points out to us the Son of God descending in the clouds of heaven, and exhibits to us the glorious spectacle of "them who sleep in Jesus," as they are summoned from their graves and assembled before him. It gives us the assurance that of those who have departed in the faith of Christ, and those who possessing the same faith, are alive at the period of this mighty consummation, not one shall be wanting: they shall all meet him and shall be with him for ever.

We cannot imagine a sorrow which considerations

like this are not suited to alleviate. For whatever be our troubles, whether extreme poverty, or bodily pain, or mental affliction from whatever quarter it may arise, the gospel presents to us, in the resurrection of the dead, and the prospects of a blessed immortality, a remedy for every evil. Do we indeed believe that we are only as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth?" Are we persuaded, that when this mortal life is ended, we shall cast off all the cares and afflictions which disturbed us; and that after this corruptible body shall have slumbered for a season, we shall ascend to meet the Lord in the air, and be with Him for ever? These are reflections which can lighten the heaviest burden of mortality, and deprive even death of his terrors. "Wherefore," says the apostle, "comfort one another with these words;" when you have occasion to console a Christian mind, let not these motives be forgotten: remind each other of the declarations of the gospel, and of the high destiny which awaits you; endeavour to raise the contemplation of the depressed and the sorrowful, to the day of the Lord: let them dwell upon the realities of that scene, when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and the free spirit, no longer confined by the chains and shackles of mortality, shall expatiate in perfect happiness through the unmeasured regions of that heavenly world. What a blessing would the gospel prove, if all who are in trouble and distress could bring home to their minds the motives here suggested! How light would be our afflictions, if we could turn from them to the bright anticipations of the great day! What a source

of never-failing consolation does such a subject present to us, if we are only qualified to apply to it ! Are we then, my brethren, living in such communion with Christ, that we may hope to die in the Lord ! “ The life which we now live in the flesh, do we live by the faith of the Son of God ? ” Are we seeking daily for a more perfect conformity to His likeness ? Unless we possess that character, and are influenced by these desires, comfort the Scriptures give us none ; but if we are indeed living to Him who died for us, then may we appropriate to ourselves the consolations of the gospel, not doubting that to us, as well as to all the faithful servants of Christ, is the assurance held forth, that we shall attain to the resurrection of the just, and enter into the joy of the Lord.

IMMORTALITY.

[REV. DR. CHANNING.]


THE more our nature is enquired into, the more clearly it discovers the impress of immortality. I do not mean, that this evidence supersedes all other. From its very nature it can only be understood thoroughly by improved and purified minds. The proof of immortality, which is suited to all understandings, is found in the Gospel, sealed by the blood and confirmed by the resurrection of Christ. But this, I think, is made more impressive, by a

demonstration of its harmony with the teachings of nature. To me, nature and revelation speak with one voice on the great theme of man's future being. Let not their joint witness be unheard.

How full, how bright are the evidences of this grand truth! How weak are the common arguments which scepticism arrays against it! To me, there is but one objection against immortality, if objection it may be called, and this arises from the very greatness of the truth. My mind sometimes sinks under its weight, is lost in its immensity; I scarcely dare believe that such a good is placed within my reach. When I think of myself, as existing through all future ages, as surviving this earth, and that sky, as exempted from every imperfection and error of my present being, as clothed with an angel's glory, as comprehending with my intellect and embracing in my affections an extent of creation compared with which the earth is a point; when I think of myself, as looking on the outward universe with an organ of vision that will reveal to me a beauty and harmony and order not now imagined, and as having an access to the minds of the wise and good, which will make them in a sense my own; when I think of myself, as forming friendships with innumerable beings of rich and varied intellect, and of the noblest virtue, as introduced to the society of heaven, as meeting there the great and excellent of whom I have read in history, as joined with "the just made perfect" in an ever-enlarging ministry of benevolence, as conversing with Jesus Christ with the familiarity of friendship, and especially as having an

immediate intercourse with God, such as the closest intimacies of earth dimly shadow forth ; when this thought of my future being comes to me, whilst I hope, I also fear ; the blessedness seems too great : the consciousness of present weakness and unworthiness is almost too strong for hope. But when, in this frame of mind, I look round on the creation, and see there the marks of an omnipotent goodness, to which nothing is impossible, and from which everything may be hoped ; when I see around me the proofs of an Infinite Father, who must desire the perpetual progress of his intellectual offspring ; when I look next at the human mind, and see what powers a few years have unfolded, and discern in it the capacity of everlasting improvement ; and especially when I look at Jesus, the conqueror of death, the heir of immortality, who has gone as the forerunner of mankind into the mansions of light and purity, I can and do admit the almost overpowering thought of the everlasting life, growth, felicity of the human soul.

To *all* is this felicity offered ; a good which turns to darkness and worthlessness the splendour and excellence of the most favoured lot on earth. I say, it is *offered*. It cannot be forced on us ; from its nature, it must be won. Immortal happiness is nothing more than the unfolding of our own minds, the full, bright exercise of our best powers ; and these powers are never to be unfolded here or hereafter, but through our own free exertion. To anticipate a higher existence whilst we neglect our own souls, is a delusion on which reason frowns no



less than revelation. Dream not of a heaven into which you may enter, live here as you may. To such as waste the present state, the future will not, cannot, bring happiness. There is no concord between them and that world of purity. A human being, who has lived without God, and without self-improvement, can no more enjoy heaven, than a mouldering body, lifted from the tomb and placed amidst beautiful prospects, can enjoy the light through its decayed eyes, or feel the balmy air which blows away its dust. Immortality is a glorious doctrine; but not given us for speculation or amusement. Its happiness is to be realized only through our own struggles with ourselves, only through our own reaching forward to new virtue and piety. To be joined with Christ in heaven, we must be joined with him now in spirit, in the conquest of temptation, in charity and well-doing. Immortality should begin here. The seed is now to be sown, which is to expand for ever. "Be not weary then in well-doing; for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not."

THE RE-UNION OF PIOUS FRIENDS IN THE HEAVENLY STATE.


[REV. ROBERT HALL.]

WHEN the objects of our love are taken from the scene which they were accustomed to adorn and bless, our chief consolation will undoubtedly arise from the prospect of soon meeting in a

better world, where those who have been fellow-pilgrims in this vale of tears will be associated in the presence of the Saviour never more to part.

If the mere conception of the re-union of good men, in a future state, infused a momentary rapture into the mind of Tully; if an airy speculation (for there is reason to fear it had little hold on his convictions), could inspire him with such delight, what may we be expected to feel, who are assured of such an event by the true sayings of God! How should we rejoice in the prospect, the certainty, rather, of spending a blissful eternity with those whom we loved on earth, of seeing them emerge from the ruins of the tomb, not only uninjured, but refined and perfected, "with every tear wiped away from their eyes," standing before the throne of God and the Lamb, "in white robes, and palms in their hands, crying with a loud voice, Salvation to God, that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever!" What delight will it afford to renew the sweet counsel we have taken together, to recount the toils of combat, and the labour of the way, and to approach not the house, but the throne of God, in company, in order to join in the symphonies of heavenly voices, and lose ourselves amidst the splendours and fruitions of the beatific vision!

To that state all the pious on earth are tending; and if there is a law from the operation of which none are exempt, which irresistibly conveys their bodies to darkness and to dust, there is another, not less certain or less powerful, which conducts their spirits to the abodes of bliss, to the bosom of their Father and



their God. The wheels of nature are not made to roll backward ; every thing presses on towards eternity ; from the birth of time an impetuous current has set in, which bears all the sons of men towards that interminable ocean. Meanwhile heaven is attracting to itself whatever is congenial to its nature, is enriching itself by the spoils of earth, and collecting within its capacious bosom whatever is pure, permanent, and divine, leaving nothing for the last fire to consume but the objects of corrupt desire, while every thing which grace has prepared and beautified shall be gathered and selected from the ruins of the world ; to adorn that eternal city, “ which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Let us obey the voice that calls us thither ; let us “ seek the things that are above,” and no longer cleave to a world which must shortly perish, and which we must shortly quit, while we neglect to prepare for that in which we are invited to dwell for ever. Let us follow in the track of those holy men, who have taught us by their voice, and encouraged us by their example, “ that laying aside every weight, and the sin that most easily besets us, we may run with patience the race that is set before us.” While every thing within us and around us reminds us of the approach of death, and concurs to teach us that this is not our rest, let us hasten our preparations for another world, and earnestly implore that grace, which alone can put an end to that fatal war which our desires have too long waged with our destiny. When these move in

the same direction, and that which the will of heaven renders unavoidable shall become our choice, all things will be ours; life will be divested of its vanity, and death of its terrors. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness."

THE RE-UNION OF PIOUS FRIENDS IN THE HEAVENLY STATE.

[REV. ROBERT ASPLAND.]

THE rational and scriptural view of our earthly state is that of its being an education for heaven; but all its lessons would be thrown away, and be worse than useless, if in heaven, as on earth, man were not to be a companion and a friend. Our natural sympathies and affections are unerring, and they all point to a future life, as a scene of social usefulness, improvement, and enjoyment, corresponding to our best and noblest wishes, but infinitely beyond our happiest experience. A virtuous family is a type and a pledge of future blissful communion. The law of the Creator that ensures a father's love, a mother's tenderness, is an argument conducted in

Heaven's own form of demonstration and inscribed in Heaven's own indelible characters, that the parent and the child are destined to be to each other for ever a mutual blessing ; for were it not so, this wonderful ordination of the Mighty Maker, by which heart answers to heart in the parental and filial relations, would, in some cases, as in that of the breaking-up of these relations as soon as they are formed, be a contrivance without an end, and in all cases a fallacious moral intimation, or rather a complex moral apparatus producing only disappointment.

1. The subject shows the dignity of man as an immortal being, and the dignity of society which will be renewed in heaven, never to be dissolved.

You cannot despise, you cannot but honour, you cannot revere too much a being whom God has destined to live for ever : you cannot estimate lightly, you cannot help regarding with awe that community of human beings which is an example and earnest of future and eternal fellowship.

And to honour man and to revere society, is the first of happy feelings, and the beginning of all virtue.

I tremble most at the contemplation of infidelity when I see that it regards man as a mere collection of organized dust, and the social fabric as composed of a certain number of accidentally associated atoms, soon to be dispersed into their original insignificance. This is a theory neither for the mind nor for the heart of man. Mean and abject in his own estimation must he be that embraces it ; and let him possess but the common portion of benevolence, and

melancholy and distressing must be his thoughts as he contemplates the destiny of man, fated to fall into eternal nothingness.

An unbeliever there was in the last age, whom Providence had gifted with every talent that can ennoble a human being ; of commanding intellect, of lofty imagination, of never-failing conscious power of mind ; of natural influence over all who came within the range of his genius ; of eloquence, that captivates even now, though it wants the eye that spoke more than the tongue, and the voice that shook by its tones those whom its words failed of convincing, and though it is commonly exercised in making the worse appear the better reason—this accomplished man, destitute of only one sense, one taste, one habit—the habit, the taste, the sense of piety ; as if Providence designed to show the world how poor a creature is the noblest man that is blind—blind to his Maker, blind to the real character of his species, blind to his own destiny—I allude to Bolingbroke, the pride of his age and country—he, with all his philosophy, was struck to the heart on seeing a friend struggling with death—and exclaimed, in language that shows, if anything can, that without the Christian hope man is nothing, and society is a delusion—“ ’Tis hardly worth while to be here at all ! ” *

Compare with this confession the triumphant de-

* See Spence's *Anecdotes* (Singer's Edition, 1810), p. 320.

claration of the apostle, preparing for martyrdom—"I am ready to be offered, I have finished my course, I have fought the good fight. I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness;" and then say with whom is true philosophy—with whom true dignity? With him that holds man, and the societies of men, to be mere dust and ashes, blown into various fantastic shapes by the wind of chance, presently to fall back to their pristine worthlessness; or with him that reveres man, and every man as a child of God, formed in the image of undecaying excellence, and the communion of man upon earth as the first essay of social existence, the symbol of indissoluble, happy and perfect society through endless ages?

2. We derive from the subject an admonition of the necessity and lasting influence of the social virtues; for it shows us that mutual affection, courtesy, compassion and tenderness, are not merely serviceable to present happiness, but will be the ground and preparation for happiness future and for ever.

The apostle has marked one class of mankind as barred out from heaven, those that want mutual affection; and has thus inversely attributed fitness for that happy state to those that, with other virtues, cultivate love and friendship.

All the kindly sentiments of our nature are from Heaven, and, like the flower that is opened by the sun, turn and bend to the source of light from which they derive their beauty and fragrance.

A state of charity and love is heaven begun upon earth.

Our religious' hopes confirm, and sanctify, and encourage our friendships.

The pious and affectionate *Baxter* says upon this subject, and his declaration is congenial to the mind of every Christian of a well-tempered spirit—"I profess from the experience of my soul, that it is my belief that I shall love my friends in heaven, that principally kindles my love to them on earth: and if I thought I should never know them more, and consequently not love them after death, I should now love them comparatively little, as I do other transitory things—but now I converse with them with delight, as believing I shall converse with them for ever."*

Were this renewal and everlasting continuance of our virtuous earthly connexions constantly in our view, how studious should we be of all the delicacy of love and all the tenderness of friendship; how careful lest we should be insensibly alienated from one another; how watchful lest any root of bitterness should produce evil fruit in our domestic circles; how much alarmed at the consciousness of any feeling working division between us and those whose hearts and hands Providence has joined to ours!

The holy apostle's exhortation to husbands and wives applies to all that stand in near relation—that they should "dwell together as heirs of the grace of life, that their prayers be not hindered."

* Converse with God, &c. p. 79.

3. The subject exhibits the glorious prospect that lies before the Christian in the world beyond the grave.

This is not his rest ; on earth he is a stranger and pilgrim ; his home is in the heavens.

The hope and belief that death will introduce him to a communion of high intelligence and pure enjoyment is of power to reconcile him to his departure, and to inspire him in the midst of nature's decays with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Before Christianity, the consciousness of having cultivated the social feeling inspired multitudes with the good hope that Cyrus, the Persian prince, is reported to have expressed on his death-bed—"I have been a lover of mankind," said he, "and a friend and merciful, and now I expect to communicate in that great kindness which He shows that is the great God, and Father of men and mercies."*

The feeling is eminently Christian, and the lover of his species from pure Christian motives is borne up by the assurance of his unity with his fellow-creatures, even when all the billows of mortality are passing over him.

When the good Mr. Thomas Firmin, whose religion was shown in doing good, though he strove to reform the doctrine of the Church, believing that the more pure Christianity is, the kinder will be its influence and the greater blessing to the fatherless and widow—when this excellent man was dying in great pain, he said to his friend, Bishop

* Bishop Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Dying*, 8vo. 1658, p. 70.

Fowler, modestly, but emphatically—"I am now going, and I trust God will not condemn me to worse company than I have loved and used in the present life." †

Children meeting after long absence and separation under the paternal roof; mariners, gaining their haven, the abode of friendship, after a long and perilous voyage—are but faint examples of the happiness attendant upon the rejunction of virtuous friends on the shores of eternity. All uncertainty at an end, every danger passed, every hope fulfilled, faith turned into sight,—heart will be knit to heart in closer connexion than is known amidst the infirmities of earth. Voices of congratulation will rise on every side, and the tide of human joy will swell and roll along, bearing sounds of praise to the Almighty Deliverer, who, sitting on the throne of grace and mercy, maketh all things new.

Finally: This subject is abundant in consolation on the death of virtuous and pious friends, who are not dead, as uninstructed nature interprets death, but merely asleep, and are watched while they sleep by the Lord of life, who will presently awake them, to behold glories as yet invisible, and unutterable by mortal tongues.

It may be that even now, while we speak of them and mourn their loss, in some mode of existence which we understand not, they are absent from the body to be present with the Lord; and their depar-

† The Life of Thomas Firmin, late Citizen of London, 8vo. 1698, p. 62.

ture, however grievous for a time to us, may be an immediate blessing to them ; for an apostle has taught us that, with regard to the individual, it is far better to be with Christ than to fill the highest seat of usefulness and honour upon earth.

Whether they wake or sleep, it is well with them, for they are in the arms of Omnipotent Mercy.

We are following them with the never-failing step of Time.

And they await our arrival—God having provided that without us they should not be made perfect.

Hear, then, Christian mourners! for the living and the dead hear the words of the Comforter—
“ Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you ; and I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.”

THE INTRINSIC AUTHORITY AND VALUE OF THE GOSPEL.

[THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.]

RELIGION is the highest law of our being—ought it not therefore to be one of the first objects of our inquiry? Christianity comes as the immediate communication of God to man ; and when God speaks, shall man refuse to listen? We are moral beings made in the image of our Creator, intrusted with

valuable talents, owing much to God and man, and bearing a high responsibility ; Christianity proffers a complete and unerring rule of life ; what instructor so valuable, what guide so important ? We are eager in the pursuit of happiness ; it is our anxious inquiry, who shall show us any good ? Christianity proffers counsels on this subject, which are infallible ; and discloses the only true and inexhaustible sources of happiness, where we may drink it pure. We find ourselves exposed to trouble ; our powers are limited, our nature is frail. We are broken by disappointment, wasted by sickness, racked with pain, desolated by adversity. This world can impart nothing to relieve our agony, or to scatter our despair. But the consolations of Christianity are ample ; and they have breathed fortitude and resignation into the bosoms of the most wretched. The hand of time presses heavily upon us ; our sun has passed its meridian, and is descending rapidly. Our limbs totter under the infirmities of nature, and the decay of age. We are called to weep over the triumphs of death, and to deposit in the grave, one after another, the objects of our affections and our hopes ; blasted, often, in all the promise of youth and health, vigour and beauty ; the conviction of our own mortality forces itself home upon our hearts ; to whom shall we go but unto Jesus ? with whom but him are the words of eternal life ?

“ The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” Visit the chamber of sickness and death. Spread before their wretched victim all the glittering objects

of human ambition : show him the treasures of his wealth ; they cannot purchase the alleviation of a single pang : sound in his ear the loud notes of fame ; it is all discord to him : tell him that the banquet is prepared, and the revel begun ; to him it is all vanity and vexation of spirit. This world is all a fleeting show ; it is Christianity alone, which, by disclosing to us its connection with another life, gives it any value. To the Christian, the objects of earthly ambition appear in their true character, transient, perishable, vain ;—he looks far beyond the limited horizon, which bounds the mere earthly view ; and taking his stand at the broken and emptied sepulchre of Jesus, it is there he gets a prospect of the promised land ; and amidst all the desolation of time, and all the ravages of death around him, he feels that he has lost nothing.

In Christianity, we have a religion which comes thus clothed with divine authority ; which imparts instructions thus useful and necessary ; which inspires hopes thus consolatory and transporting ; which proffers to us a system of duty and happiness, in which as yet the world has detected no error, has found nothing deficient, and nothing superfluous. We appeal then with confidence to every intelligent and reflecting man, and ask only, what subject has claims upon his study and investigation in any degree comparable to the Gospel ?

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION, A PLEDGE OF A FUTURE LIFE.

[REV. DR. CHANNING.]

THERE is one method in which Christ's resurrection gives aid to our faith in another life which is not often dwelt on, and which seems worthy of attention. Our principal doubts and difficulties in regard to that state, spring chiefly from the senses and the imagination, and not from the reason. The eye, fixed on the lifeless body, on the wan features and the motionless limbs,—and the imagination, following the frame into the dark tomb, and representing to itself the stages of decay and ruin, are apt to fill and oppress the mind with discouraging and appalling thoughts. The senses can detect in the pale corse not a trace of the activity of that spirit which lately moved it. Death seems to have achieved an entire victory; and when reason and revelation speak of continued and a higher life, the senses and imagination, pointing to the disfigured and mouldering body, obscure by their sad forebodings the light which reason and revelation strive to kindle in the bereaved soul.

Now the resurrection of Christ meets, if I may so say, the senses and imagination on their own ground, contends with them with their own weapons. It shows us the very frame on which death, in its most humiliating form, had set its seal, and which had been committed in utter hopelessness to the tomb, rising, breathing, moving with new life, and rising, not to

return again to the earth, but, after a short sojourn, to ascend from the earth to a purer region, and thus to attest man's destination to a higher life. These facts submitted to the very senses, and almost necessarily kindling the imagination to explore the unseen world, seem particularly suited to overcome the main difficulties in the way of Christian faith. Reason is not left alone to struggle with the horrors of the tomb. The assurance that Jesus Christ, who lived on the earth, who died on the cross, and was committed, a mutilated, bleeding frame, to the receptacle of the dead, rose uninjured, and then exchanged an earthly for a heavenly life, puts to flight the sad auguries which rise, like spectres, from the grave, and help us to conceive, as in our present weakness we could not otherwise conceive, of man's appointed triumph over death.

THE EXTINCTION OF DEATH BY CHRIST.


[REV. JOHN HARRIS, AUTHOR OF "MAMMON."]

SO ample and sufficient are the preparatory measures which Christ has taken for the final extinction of death, that he speaks of it in terms of comparative disparagement and indifference. So effectually is it disarmed and mutilated, and so completely at the disposal of Christ, that he speaks of it as if it were not. "Whosoever believeth in me shall never die." "If a man keep my sayings, he

•

shall never taste of death—he shall never see death.” In accordance with these representations, he has given to the state of Death the soft and tranquillizing name of Sleep. This use of the term, indeed, was not unknown to Jewish saints ; but, as applied by them to death, it denoted chiefly the silence, darkness, and inactivity of the grave. The Greeks, too, had long been accustomed to speak of death in the softest terms: the dead they often spoke of as *the departed*, *the worn-out*, and called their burial-grounds “dormitories,” or sleeping-places. But this arose partly from the dislike they felt to allude to a gloomy and unwelcome subject, and partly from a wish to propitiate the deceased, of whom they stood in considerable dread. How superior the sense in which Jesus employed the term, Sleep ! They used it as a figure, but he turned it into a reality ;—they uttered it from fear, but he made it the language of hope and of faith. He used it with the highest authority, for he was about to awaken one of the sleepers from his sleep ; and however protracted the slumbers of his people may be, he knew that they are all finally to hear his voice, and to come forth.

Dense as the gloom is which hangs over the mouth of the sepulchre, it is the spot, above all others, where the gospel, if it enters, shines and triumphs. In the busy sphere of life and health, it encounters an active antagonist ; the world confronts it,—aims to obscure its glories,—to deny its claims,—to drown its voice,—to dispute its progress,—to drive it from the ground it occupies. But from the mouth of the



grave the world retires : it shrinks from the contest there ; it leaves a clear and open space in which the gospel can assert its claims, and unveil its glories, without opposition or fear. There the infidel and the worldling look anxiously around ; but the world has left them helpless, and fled. There the Christian looks around, and, lo, the angel of mercy is standing close by his side. The gospel kindles a torch, which not only irradiates the valley of the shadow of death, but throws a radiance into the world beyond, and reveals it peopled with the sainted spirits of those who have died in Jesus. It descends with us into the low chamber of the grave,—bids us look on its silent inmates ; and to look on them with the persuasion that they only sleep. It assures us that death, like sleep, is not the destruction of the living principle, but only a temporary change in the mode of its operation ; that, like sleep, it is a state of rest, discharging us from all the concerns of the world ; and most of all, that, like sleep, it will not be perpetual, but only endure for a night. It tells us that a day will dawn on the world, when Jesus, assuming an aspect of infinite benignity, will say in effect, of all his sleeping saints, as he said of Lazarus, “ I go to awake them out of sleep.”

Oh ! how vast the immortal awakening ! Who can lift his mind to the greatness of the occasion ! Where is the height from which we can command a view of the sublime spectacle ? In prospect of it Jesus said, “ The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die,

it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." As the first-fruits of them that sleep, he has arisen and appeared before God, the certain pledge of the great harvest-home. " Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe ; multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision." The wide earth shall " stand thick," and wave with that ocean plenitude of life. The produce of the fields, every year, is a renewed triumph of life over death ; but the triumph of life on that day will be final and complete, leaving not an atom for which death can contend. It will be a triumph of the highest order, consisting not in the mere creation of new being, but in the release and reanimation of what had been dragged away from the territories of life ;—death itself will be turned into life,—corruption will put on incorruption.

To consummate the triumph, life on that day will be crowned with immortality ; it will not merely be restored, but ennobled, exalted, to the highest state of security and glory it can sustain. From the ruinous heap of every grave, a living structure shall arise, built up into an imperishable monument of " the Resurrection and the Life ;" in the stead of corruption, it shall be inaccessible to decay ; " for neither can they die any more ; they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." In the stead of dishonour, it will be raised in glory, radiating a splendour which shall eclipse all sublunary glory. In the place of weakness, it shall be clothed with the vigour of immortal youth, asking no relaxation or repose ; the wings of the soul accompanying and aiding it in

all its untiring flights. In the place of a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body ; the original grossness of its materiality shall be purged away ; it shall be refined and etherialized into spirit—a robe of light rivalling the invisible essence of the soul itself ; while each of its senses shall form an inlet to floods of enjoyment, and each of its organs be instinct and emulous with zeal for the divine glory.

INATTENTION TO THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE.

[REV. ROBERT HALL.]

WHEN it is considered that the doctrine of a life to come is ascertained by the advent of the Messiah, with a degree of evidence so superior to that which attaches to any other futurity, that he who refuses to believe it on his testimony, would not be persuaded although one rose from the dead, the propensity to disregard it, however general, is the most astonishing phenomenon in nature. Man is naturally a prospective creature, endowed with a capacity not only of comparing the present with the past, but also of anticipating the future, and dwelling with anxious rumination on scenes which are yet remote. He is capable of carrying his views, of attaching his anxieties, to a period much more distant than that which measures the limits of his present existence ; capable, we distinctly perceive, of plunging

into the depths of future duration, of identifying himself with the sentiments and opinions of a distant age, and of enjoying, by anticipation, the fame of which he is aware he shall never be conscious, and the praises he shall never hear. So strongly is he disposed to link his feelings with futurity, that shadows become realities, when contemplated as subsisting there; and the phantom of posthumous celebrity, the faint image of his being, impressed on future generations, is often preferred to the whole of his present existence, with all its warm and vivid realities. The complexion of the day that is passing over him, is determined by the anticipations of the morrow: the present borrows its brightness and its gloom from the future, which, presenting itself to his contemplation as in a mirror, incessantly agitates him with apparitions of terror or delight. In the calculations of interest, the mind is affected in the same manner; it is perpetuity which stamps its value on whatever we possess, so that the lowest epicure would prefer a small accession to his property to the most exquisite repast; and none are found so careless of futurity, as not to prefer the inheritance he may bequeath, to one of equal value the title to which expires with his life.

How is it then we find it so difficult to prevail upon men to fix their attention firmly on another world, that real future existence which reason assures us is probable, which revelation teaches us is certain, which is separated from us by so narrow a boundary, and into which thousands of our fellow creatures are passing every moment? How is it that the professed

followers of Him who came from heaven, who was sent forth from the Father to conduct us thither, are so indisposed to turn their thoughts and contemplations to that unchanging state of being into which they are so shortly to enter? It is not, we perceive, that to move forward is not congenial with our mental constitution: it is not because we are so enchanted with the present scene, as to be incapable of diverting our attention from it; for we are continually disquieted by a restless desire of something future: it is not because we are seldom warned, or reminded of another state of existence, for every funeral bell, every opening grave, every symptom of decay within and of change without us, is a separate warning.

Were any other event of far inferior moment, ascertained by evidence which made but a distant approach to that which attests the certainty of a life to come; had we equal assurance that after a very limited though uncertain period, we should be called to migrate into a distant land, whence we were never to return, the intelligence would fill every breast with solicitude; it would become the theme of every tongue; and we should avail ourselves with the utmost eagerness, of all the means of information respecting the prospects which awaited us in that unknown country. Much of our attention would be occupied in preparing for our departure; we should cease to regard the place we now inhabit as our home; and nothing would be considered as of moment, but as it bore upon our future destination. How strange is it then, that with the certainty we all possess of shortly entering into another world, we avert our

eyes as much as possible from the prospect ; that we seldom permit it to penetrate us ; and that the moment the recollection recurs, we hasten to dismiss it, as an unwelcome intrusion ? Is it not surprising that the volume we profess to recognise as the record of immortality, and the sole depository of whatever information it is possible to obtain respecting the portion which awaits us, should be consigned to neglect, and rarely, if ever, consulted with the serious intention of ascertaining our future condition ?

INFIDELITY.

[REV. DR. ANDREW THOMSON.]

IT is amidst trials and sorrows that Infidelity appears in its justest and most frightful aspect. When subjected to the multifarious ills which flesh is heir to, what is there to uphold our spirit, but the discoveries and the prospects that are unfolded to us by revelation ? What, for this purpose, can be compared with the belief that every thing here below is under the management of infinite wisdom and goodness, and that there is an immortality of bliss awaiting us in another world ! If this conviction be taken away, what is it that we can have recourse to on which the mind may patiently and safely repose in the season of adversity ? Where is the balm which I may apply with effect to my wounded heart after I have rejected the aid of the Almighty Physician ?

Impose upon me whatever hardships you please ; give me nothing but the bread of sorrow to eat ; take from me the friends in whom I had placed my confidence ; lay me in the cold hut of poverty, and on the thorny bed of disease ; set death before me in all its terrors ; do all this,—only let me trust in my Saviour, and I will “fear no evil,”—I will rise superior to affliction,—I will “rejoice in my tribulation.” But let infidelity interpose between God and my soul, and draw its impenetrable veil over a future state of existence, and limit all my trust to the creatures of a day, and all my expectations to a few years as uncertain as they are short, and how shall I bear up with fortitude or with cheerfulness, under the burden of distress ? Or where shall I find one drop of consolation to put into the bitter draught which has been given me to drink ? I look over the whole range of this wilderness in which I dwell, but I see not one covert from the storm, nor one leaf for the healing of my soul, nor one cup of cold water to refresh me in the weariness and the faintings of my pilgrimage.

The very conduct of infidels, in spreading their system with so much eagerness and industry, affords a striking proof that its influence is essentially hostile to human happiness. For what is their conduct ? Why, they allow that religion contributes largely to the comfort of man,—that in this respect, as well as with respect to morality, it would be a great evil were it to lose its hold over their affections,—and that those are no friends to the world who would shake or destroy their belief in it. And yet in the very

face of this acknowledgment, they scruple not to publish their doubts and their unbelief concerning it among their fellow-men, and with all the cool deliberation of philosophy, and sometimes with all the keenness and ardour of a zealot, to do the very thing which they profess to deprecate as pernicious to the well-being and comfort of the species. Whether they are sincere in this profession, or whether they are only trifling with the sense and feeling of mankind, still it demonstrates the hardening influence of their principles; and from principles, which make those who hold them so reckless of the peace and order and happiness of their brethren, what can be reasonably expected, but every thing which is most destructive of human comfort?

It is true, the infidel may be very humane in the intercourse of life; but, after all, what dependence can be placed upon that humanity of his, which deals out bread to the hungry, and clothing to the naked, and yet would sacrifice to literary vanity, or to something worse, whatever can give support in trial, and consolation in death? He may sympathize with me in my distress, and speak to me of immortality, and, at the very moment, his constitutional kindness may be triumphing over his cold-blooded and gloomy speculations. But his speculations have shed a misery over my heart, which no language of his can dissipate, and which makes his most affectionate words sound in my ear like the words of mockery and scorn.

He has destroyed me, and he cannot save me, and he cannot comfort me. At his bidding I have

renounced that Saviour in whom I once trusted, and was happy, and he now pities me ;—as if his most pitying tones could charm away the anguish of my bosom, and make me forget that it was he himself who planted it there, and planted it so deep, and nourished it so well, that nothing but the power of that heaven, whose power I have denied, is able to pluck it out!

Yes, after he has destroyed my belief in the superintending providence of God,—after he has taught me that the prospect of an hereafter is but the baseless fabric of a vision,—after he has bred and nourished me in the contempt for that sacred volume which alone throws light over this benighted world,—after having argued me out of my faith by his sophistries, or laughed me out of it by his ridicule,—after having thus wrung from my soul every drop of consolation, and dried up my very spirit within me,—yes, after having accomplished this in the season of my health and my prosperity, he would come to me while I mourn, and treat me like a drivelling idiot, whom he may sport with, because he has ruined me, and to whom, in the plenitude of his compassion, too late, and too unavailing, he may talk of truths in which he himself does not believe, and which he has long exhorted me, and has at last persuaded me, to cast away as the dreams and delusions of human folly. From such comforters may Heaven preserve me! “My soul, come not thou into *their* secrets. Unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.”

SUBMISSION TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

[DR. LONGLEY, BISHOP OF RIPON.]

IF it be the will of God that we should drink the cup, though man has no power to make it pass from him, nevertheless, the bitterness of its dregs may be tempered by some unhallowed means, which weaken or destroy its efficacy; for sometimes persons attempt to hush the importunate voice of anxiety or sorrow amidst worldly pleasures, and so to occupy the mind with the objects of sense as to leave no room for those obtrusive thoughts which they wish to banish. But this is a direct frustration of the ways of Providence, which strikes the blow to warn us that there is much within that needs correction, and bids us institute a strict inquiry into the recesses of our hearts. Others, whose more refined feelings are shocked perhaps, at such a remedy for their bruised spirit, under the pressure of mental affliction, avoid mixing with the world, which, instead of affording relief, serves, as they find, but to irritate the wound. This drives them into the opposite extreme; and while they think that solitude and retirement best befit those who are afflicted, they brood in secret over their sorrows, and embitter them even beyond the portion which the Lord hath laid upon them.

The Christian's path, however, will lead him to avoid either of these extremes. It will not be his purpose so to fortify his heart by any external defence,

as to prevent the purposes of Providence from taking their due effect upon him; nor will he so entirely sink under the blow as to be rendered incapable of useful exercise in the service of his Heavenly Father. But, since it has pleased the Lord to visit him, he will bare his heart to the searching glance of the Almighty, as well as to the scrutinizing eye of his own conscience; he will try his ways, and turn again unto the Lord; will pray that He who hath set his secret sins in the light of his countenance, would create within him a clean heart and a right spirit. He will view his sufferings as an especial call to arouse himself from a state perhaps of listlessness and languor in his religious duties, to walk more humbly with his God, and to display a warmer zeal in the performance of the active obligations of Christianity.

And even should such pious devotedness to the supreme will not at once be rewarded by religious consolations, by that peace of God which passeth all understanding, he will not therefore conclude that his mercy is clean gone, and his promise hath failed for evermore; for he will rest in the Lord, and wait patiently, till, in his own good time, he shall think it fit to deliver him out of all his trouble; supported as he is, by the comforting assurance that "all things are working together for good to them that love God." Out of the very depths he will call upon him; and the remembrance of past mercies unmerited, though perhaps but ill requited, while it abases him still more in his own eyes, will give him sufficient assurance of their being renewed, and

will prove the steadfast anchor of his soul, when the gloomy and tempestuous clouds are gathering around him. At any rate, under the most unpromising appearances, so unshaken will be his confidence in the divine goodness, that he will join in the devout and energetic declaration of Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." This is the victory which overcometh the world.

Are there any, then, who are weary and faint in their minds, by reason of the burden which the Lord has laid upon them? Remember that the Captain of your salvation, whose whole life was one great example for your imitation, was made perfect through suffering; that labour is the way to rest; and that it is through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Meanwhile, no secret struggle passes unregarded by the eye of Heaven; no murmur repressed, no favourite wish renounced in obedience to the will of God, but it is recorded in the book of life; and your Father, who sees in secret, shall reward you openly.

THE HEADSTONE.

[PROFESSOR WILSON.]

THE coffin was let down to the bottom of the grave, the planks were removed from the heaped-up brink, the first rattling clods had struck their knell, the quick shovelling was over, and the long, broad, skilfully cut pieces of turf were aptly joined together,

and trimly laid by the beating spade, so that the newest mound in the church-yard was scarcely distinguishable from those that were grown over by the undisturbed grass and daisies of a luxuriant spring. The burial was soon over ; and the party, with one consenting motion, having uncovered their heads, in decent reverence of the place and occasion, were beginning to separate, and about to leave the church-yard.

Here some acquaintances, from distant parts of the parish, who had not had opportunity of addressing each other in the house that had belonged to the deceased, nor in the course of the few hundred yards that the little procession had to move over from his bed to his grave, were shaking hands quietly but cheerfully, and inquiring after the welfare of each other's families. There, a small knot of neighbours were speaking, without exaggeration, of the respectable character which the deceased had borne, and mentioning to one another little incidents of his life, some of them so remote as to be known only to the greyheaded persons of the group. While a few yards farther removed from the spot, were standing together parties who discussed ordinary concerns altogether unconnected with the funeral, such as the state of the markets, the promise of the season, or change of tenants ; but still with a sobriety of manner and voice that was insensibly produced by the influence of the simple ceremony now closed, by the quiet graves around, and the shadow of the spire and grey walls of the house of God.

Two men yet stood together at the head of the

grave with countenances of sincere, but unimpassioned grief. They were brothers, the only sons of him who had been buried, and there was something in their situation that naturally kept the eyes of many directed upon them, for a long time, and more intently than would have been the case, had there been nothing more observable about them than the common symptoms of a common sorrow. But these two brothers, who were now standing at the head of their father's grave, had for some years been totally estranged from each other, and the only words that had passed between them during all that time, had been uttered within a few days past, during the necessary preparations for the old man's funeral.

No deep and deadly quarrel was between these brothers, and neither of them could distinctly tell the cause of this unnatural estrangement. Perhaps dim jealousies of their father's favour—selfish thoughts that will sometimes force themselves into poor men's hearts, respecting temporal expectations—unaccommodating manners on both sides—taunting words that mean little when uttered, but which rankle and fester in remembrance—imagined opposition of interests, that, duly considered, would have been found one and the same—these, and many other causes, slight when single, but strong when rising up together in one baneful band, had gradually, but fatally, infected their hearts, till at last they who in youth had been seldom separate, and truly attached, now met at market, and, miserable to say, at church, with dark and averted faces, like different clansmen during a feud.

Surely if any thing could have softened their hearts towards each other, it must have been to stand silently side by side, while the earth, stones, and clods, were falling down upon their father's coffin. And doubtless their hearts were so softened. But pride, though it cannot prevent the holy affections of nature from being felt, may prevent them from being shown; and these two brothers stood there together, determined not to let each other know the mutual tenderness that, in spite of them, was gushing up in their hearts, and teaching them the unconfessed folly and wickedness of their causeless quarrel.

A headstone had been prepared, and a person came forward to plant it. The elder brother directed him how to place it;—a plain stone, with a sand-glass, skull and cross bones, chiselled not rudely, and a few words inscribed. The younger brother regarded the operation with a troubled eye, and said, loud enough to be heard by several of the bystanders, "William, this was not kind in you, you should have told me of this. I loved my father as well as you could love him. You were the elder, and, it may be, the favourite son, but I had a right in nature to have joined you in ordering this headstone, had I not?" During these words the stone was sinking into the earth, and many persons who were on their way from the grave returned. For a while the elder brother said nothing, for he had a consciousness in his heart that he ought to have consulted his father's son in designing this last becoming mark of affection and respect to his memory; so the stone was planted in silence, and now stood erect, decently and simply,


among the other unostentatious memorials of the humble dead.

The inscription merely gave the name and age of the deceased, and told that the stone had been erected "by his affectionate sons." The sight of these words seemed to soften the displeasure of the angry man, and he said, somewhat more mildly, "Yes, we were his affectionate sons, and since my name is on the stone, I am satisfied, brother. We have not drawn together kindly of late years, and perhaps never may; but I acknowledge and respect your worth, and here, before our own friends, and before the friends of our father, with my foot above his head, I express my willingness to be on other and better terms with you, and if we cannot command love in our hearts, let us, at least, brother, bar out all unkindness." The minister, who had attended the funeral, and had something entrusted to him to say publicly before he left the churchyard, now came forward, and asked the elder brother, why he spake not regarding this matter? He saw there was something of a cold and sullen pride rising up in his heart, for not easily may any man hope to dismiss from the chamber of his heart even the vilest guest, if once cherished there. With a solemn and almost severe air, he looked upon the relenting man, and then, changing his countenance into serenity, said gently—

Behold how good a thing it is,
And how becoming well,
Together such as brethren are,
In unity to dwell.

The time, the place, and this beautiful expression of a natural sentiment, quite overcame a heart, in which many kind, if not warm, affections dwelt; and the man thus appealed to, bowed down his head and wept. "Give me your hand, brother," and it was given, while a murmur of satisfaction arose from all present, and all hearts felt kindlier and more humanely towards each other.

As the brothers stood fervently, but composedly, grasping each other's hand, in the little hollow that lay between the grave of their mother, long since dead, and of their father, whose shroud was happily not yet still from the fall of dust to dust, the minister stood beside them with a pleasant countenance, and said, "I must fulfil the promise I made to your father on his death-bed. I must read to you a few words which his hand wrote at an hour when his tongue denied its office. I must not say that you did your duty to your old father; for did he not often beseech you, apart from one another, to be reconciled, for your own sakes as Christians, for his sake, and for the sake of the mother who bare you, and Stephen who died that you might be born? When the palsy struck him for the last time, you were both absent, nor was it your fault that you were not beside the old man when he died. As long as sense continued with him here, did he think of you two, and of you two alone. Tears were in his eyes: I saw them there; and on his cheek too when no breath came from his lips. But of this no more. He died with this paper in his hand; and he made me know that I was to read it to you over his grave.



I now obey him : ‘ My sons, if you will let my bones lie quiet in the grave, near the dust of your mother, depart not from my burial till, in the name of God and Christ, you promise to love one another as you used to do. Dear boys, receive my blessing.’ ”

Some turned their heads away to hide the tears that needed not to be hidden ; and when the brothers had released each other from a long and sobbing embrace, many went up to them, and in a single word or two, expressed their joy at this perfect reconciliation. The brothers themselves walked away from the churchyard, arm in arm, with the minister to the manse. On the following Sabbath, they were seen sitting with their families in the same pew, and it was observed that they read together off the same Bible, when the minister gave out the text, and that they sang together, taking hold of the same Psalm-book. The same psalm was sung (given out at their own request,) of which one verse had been repeated at their father’s grave ; a larger sum than usual was on that Sabbath found in the plate for the poor, for Love and Charity are sisters. And ever after, both during the peace and the troubles of this life, the hearts of the brothers were as one, and in nothing were they divided.

THE VOICE OF THE GRAVE.

[REV. THOMAS MADGE.]

THE removal of any one of our fellow-creatures from the stage of life, reads to us in a solemn and impressive form, the lesson of our own mortality. It tells us in no doubtful terms, that we too, and those we love, shall at no distant time be called to lay our heads in the dust. It tells the parent that he must soon be taken from his child, and the child that he must soon be separated from his parent. Not a day passes without such examples of the common lot of humanity coming before our eyes. Not a day passes but we have to witness the melancholy transformation of health into sickness, strength into weakness, the bloom of youth into the paleness of decay, and the vigour of manhood into the feebleness of age. There is a voice incessantly crying, "All flesh is as grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field." And while it reminds us how short and precarious the tenure of our life is, and how often the great destroyer comes to blast the proudest of human expectations, and to set at nought the wisest of human calculations, it asks us at the same time, if we are thereby made more wise, more sober, more thoughtful and considerate, less devoted to the pursuits and pleasures of the world, and more earnest in our desires and breathings after God and goodness.

To such a question, the answer, I fear, must be, that our minds are commonly too little impressed by the sad and solemn events which are passing around

us, and that we suffer the sound of death to go by us like the idle wind, of which we take no notice. And yet, to human contemplation, what can be more awful and impressive than the change from life to death! What a difference between the dead and the living friend! What a difference between man thinking, acting, moving about in the world, and man, lying still and quietly in the grave! What a difference between the mind pregnant with thought and fancy and feeling, and the unconscious, unimpressible dust of the earth! Heedless, however, as we, for the most part, are to the daily repeated instructions and warnings of the great teacher, Death, there are times and seasons when our indifference can no longer be maintained, and we are compelled by the force of our natural sympathies to be serious and thoughtful. It is not easy for a man in whose breast there have lived any of the charities and endearments of life, to stand by the grave of a beloved friend and companion, and hear pronounced over him the solemn words which consign his body to the ground, without the presence and consciousness of thoughts and emotions the tendency of which is to purify and exalt. There can be few persons now before me who do not know what it is to mourn the loss of some one whom they loved and valued,—of some one whose friendship had been dear to them, and whose sympathy and counsels had been the blessing and comfort of their lives. To such I would say, can you forget the feelings which then rose up in your hearts, the pure and unearthly thoughts which then filled and occupied your minds? What was the world to you then? What

did you *then* think of its vanities and follies, of its hollow and fugitive joys, of its treacherous and deceitful allurements? For a moment, at least, the awful shadow of eternity must have come over you, blotting out the meaner passions and interests of time, and giving to the hopes of heaven, and the desire of the divine favour and approbation, the predominant sway over your inclinations and purposes. This is one way in which the dead sometimes speak, with power and effect, to the hearts of the living.

The mere contemplation of death, however, apart from those Christian views and expectations with which it should ever be connected, would be a dismal and depressing employment, paralyzing the spirit of virtuous activity, and imparting to our natures a tone of melancholy dejection and despair. Were it indeed a final event,—the goal of our short career in this world, and leading to nothing beyond,—better would it be to turn our eyes away from it, and to think of it as little as possible. But regarded, as we are taught to regard it, as the gate which, while it closes upon the present world, opens into another and a better,—as a place where, putting off our mortal covering, we are clothed with the garments of immortality,—and it is no less our interest than our duty,—it will contribute as much to our real happiness here, as to our preparation and fitness for the happiness of hereafter, sometimes to gaze at it with a steadfast look, and to ponder well upon the awful instructions with which it is fraught. To the eyes of a Christian, the dwelling-place of the pious dead presents a scene from which he will not always

be anxious to turn away. It has its principle of attraction, as well as of repulsion. It may afflict, but it will also bless. It may wound, but it will also heal. It is full of tender appeals and heart-stirring admonitions, to the influence of which we cannot often expose ourselves without thereby becoming wiser and better. In the full tide of youth, and health, and strength, when we are sailing smoothly along the sea of life, attended with smiling skies, and wafted by prosperous gales, we think not of the frail vessel in which we are embarked, nor of the great gulph into the depth of which we may shortly be plunged. But when storms and tempests arise, and the billows of adversity or of death are advancing to overwhelm us, we then become sensible of the impotence of our own strength, and casting ourselves upon Him who "rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm," we cry, "Lord, save us, or we perish!" In the bustle and tumult of the world, the "still small voice" of religion is seldom heard, or is heard only to be disregarded; but, when we are withdrawn from that noise, and every sound is hushed in the stillness of contemplation, then, when we are driven into the quiet loneliness of our own hearts, the gentlest whisperings of piety find a ready listener in our thoughts, and its consolations and its hopes present themselves to us as the only sufficient cure for the sorrows and the ills of mortality. It is when we are bending over the closing grave of a dear and cherished acquaintance, that we learn to enter more clearly into the profound meaning of that beautiful scripture, "Our life is hidden with God." It is then that we

learn, better than any human instructor can teach us, the value of those blessed human charities by which God has bound us, in the first place, to each other, and finally to himself. It is then that the lusions of the world vanish, and that we perceive more clearly, and feel more strongly, that the real excellence and beauty of life consists, not in the accumulation of wealth, or the possession of power, not in schemes of restless ambition, or the greedy pursuit of pleasure, not in pomp and show, and revelry and noise, but in the virtues and graces of a pure and renovated mind, in the silent and refreshing meditations of a well-instructed and well-harmonized spirit, and in the exercise and indulgence of those social and pious affections, which, though they have their growth on earth, though they bud and blossom in the climate of mortality, will flourish with greater vigour, and attain to more perfect maturity in that land of fairer skies, and of purer sunshine, for which they are destined. It is thus that our departed friends continue to speak to us, and it is in this way that the remembrance of their virtuous life and holy conversation, may be hallowed to our sanctification and redemption.

REMEMBRANCE OF THE HONOURED DEAD.

[REV. GEORGE WALKER.]

BEFORE the gentle and benignant religion of Christ appeared, there was found amongst men a philosophy of high and splendid pretensions, but in truth founded in an ungracious selfishness, which rejected all mournful remembrance of the dead, as a weakness of the man, and subversive of that calm and sober virtue which consists in the dispassionate and absolute possession of the mind. But the wisdom of God in the constitution of man has always prevailed over such impotent attempts: nor have the most calm and philosophic, when standing in any interesting relation, been able to divert from their thoughts the memory of the dead, to repel the deep sensibility of their loss, or to withhold the affectionate expressions of it. Indeed, it is not in human nature to look with an unconcerned eye on the numerous trophies of death; to see that unpitied destroyer break into the fold which encloses all we hold dear, and rend asunder the strong ties of nature, of friendship, and of love; yet not mourn, nor suffer the tear to flow, nor the burdened breast to heave. Heaven, which has given to us this tenderness and sensibility of soul,—Heaven, which has allied this tenderness to the most graceful virtues—expects not from us a submission, which is no test of fortitude or of better faith. If to drop the tear over the grave of a rela-

tion or friend, and deeply to feel at heart when we look on every side in vain for the beloved object, whom we so lately met in every walk of duty, or usefulness, or pleasantness ;—if this be a weakness, it is the loveliest weakness which human nature owns, and is attended with so much of kindness, friendliness, and virtue, that he is more or less than man, who can forbear to love it. Yes! for ever graceful is the sympathy which ties heart to heart, and cherishes affection even when the object is gone : thence have issued all the sweet charities of life ; thence our most refined and delicate pleasures ; and thence all those affections which polish and humanize our natures ; which expand the soul to every generous impulse, and, under the teaching of human trial, raise it at length above this world, and dispose it to all the wise and virtuous will of that God, on whom its last hope is fixed.

When we see the righteous removed from this life, whether those who are in the full exercise, or those who are putting forth the promise of good, it ought to offer itself to our thoughts that, in this very dispensation, Providence may have been most kind to them. We, who behold not in one unbroken view the present and the future, who are often moved by passion more than judgment, are liable to be deceived in our estimate of things, and may give the name of evil to events which if we were permitted to view them in all their extent, we should consider as the greatest good, and should refer to the tender mercies of our Heavenly Father. In some expressions of our sorrow for the dead, there is, I fear, a

want both of enlightened piety and enlightened friendship. Our own loss we may be allowed to feel, and with submission to God to express it; but we should not lament for the dead with the same breath, perhaps, which expresses a perfect assurance of the good part which they have acted, and the most pleasing hopes of their acceptance with their Maker. If this assurance, and these hopes, be well founded, the language of affection should be that of rejoicing at the exchange which they have made, in the probability of some impending evils from which the interposition of Providence may have rescued them. At any rate, with all our affection, we should preserve graceful deference to the divine wisdom and goodness. We look too much on the dark and mournful side; we brood over such mournful images as these, the pangs of sickness, the struggles of parting life, and the more agonizing struggles of parting friends, which, it must be confessed, leave a very painful impression on the memory; but we turn not our eye enough to the bright and joyful side. For, if rightly viewed, what is there in the death of good men, that should make it so much, on their account, lamented? How much more reason is there to envy those who have gone before, if envy were allowed to inhabit a virtuous and pious breast! What is it for them to die, but to do that, which all ought to wish to do, with their hopes? What is it, but to lay down a load, which lies heavy indeed upon some, to be no more subject to the uncertain changes of life; to the passions, the caprice, or the wickedness of men; to the vain desires and vainer fears, which

find a residence in our bosom, and hardly suffer one joy to come unmixed to us? Wedded ourselves too much to this world, we think that the friends, whom we have loved, had not tasted enough of it, had not reached its highest honours and rewards; but a wiser Being orders to each of us our lot, and his wisdom ought to teach us all, that he who has spent his time and talents well, never goes too soon into the presence of his Maker, who has provided the other world for an asylum, the only abode of pure and constant happiness.

LOVE FOR THE DEAD.

[WASHINGTON IRVING.]

THE grave is the ordeal of true affection. It is there that the divine passion of the soul manifests its superiority to the instinctive impulse of mere animal attachment. The latter must be continually refreshed and kept alive by the presence of its object; but the love that is seated in the soul, can live on long remembrance. The mere inclinations of sense languish and decline with the charms which excited them, and turn with disgust from the dismal precincts of the tomb; but it is thence that truly spiritual affection rises purified from every sensual desire, and returns, like a holy flame, to illumine and sanctify the heart of the survivor. The sorrow for the dead is the only sorrow from which we refuse

to be divorced, Every other wound we seek to heal,—every other affliction to forget; but this wound we consider it as a duty to keep open,—this affliction we cherish and brood over in solitude. Where is the mother who would willingly forget the infant that perished like a blossom from her arms, though every recollection is a pang? Where is the child that would forget the most tender of parents, though to remember be but to lament? Who, even in the hour of agony, would forget the friend over whom he mourns? Who, even when the tomb is closing upon the remains of her he most loved; when he feels his heart as it were crushed in the closing of its portals,—would accept of the consolation that must be brought by forgetfulness? No, the love which survives the tomb is one of the noblest attributes of the soul. If it has its woes, it has likewise its delights; and when the overwhelming burst of grief is calmed into the gentle tear of recollection,—when the sudden anguish and the convulsive agony over the present ruins of all that we most loved is softened away into pensive meditation on all that it was in the days of its loveliness,—who would root out such a sorrow from the heart? Though it may sometimes throw a passing cloud over the brightest hours of gaiety; or spread a deeper sadness over the hour of gloom; yet who would exchange it even for the song of pleasure, or the burst of revelry? No, there is a voice from the tomb sweeter than song. There is a remembrance of the dead to which we turn even from the charms of the living. Oh, the grave! the grave! it buries every error, covers

every defect, extinguishes every resentment! From its peaceful bosom spring none but fond regrets and tender recollections. Who can look down upon the grave even of an enemy, and not feel a compunctious throb, that he should ever have warred with the poor handful of earth that lies mouldering before him!

Aye! go to the grave of buried love, and there meditate! there settle the account with thy conscience for every past endearment unregarded of that departed being who can never, never return to be soothed by thy contrition! If thou art a child, and hast ever added a sorrow to the soul, or a furrow to the silvered brow of an affectionate parent: if thou art a husband, and hast ever caused the fond bosom that ventured its happiness in thy arms, to doubt one moment of thy kindness or thy truth; if thou art a friend, and hast ever wronged in thought, word, or deed, the spirit that generously confided in thee; if thou art a lover, and hast ever given one unmerited pang to that true heart which now lies cold and still beneath thy feet; then be sure that every unkind look, every ungracious word, every ungente action, will come thronging back upon thy memory, and knocking dolefully at thy soul; then be sure that thou wilt lie down sorrowing and repentant on the grave, and utter the unheard groan, and pour the unavailing tear; more deep, more bitter, because unheard and unavailing.

Then weave thy chaplet of flowers, and strew the beauties of nature about the grave; console thy broken spirit, if thou canst, with these tender yet

futile tributes of regret; but take warning by the bitterness of this thy contrite affliction over the dead, and henceforth be more faithful and affectionate in the discharge of thy duties to the living.

NEGLECT OF WARNINGS.

[DR. PALEY.]

A SERIOUS man hardly ever passes a day, never a week, without meeting with some warning to his conscience; without something to call to his mind his situation with respect to his future life. And these warnings, as doubtless was proper, come the more thickly upon us, the further we advance in life. The dropping into the grave of our acquaintance, and friends, and relations, what can be better calculated, not to prove,—for we do not want the point to be proved,—but to possess our hearts with a complete sense and perception of the extreme peril and hourly precariousness of our condition; namely, to teach this momentous lesson, that when we preach to you concerning heaven and hell, we are not preaching concerning things at a distance, things remote, things long before they come to pass; but concerning things near, soon to be decided, in a very short time to be fixed one way or the other? This is a truth of which we are warned by the course of mortality; yet with this truth confessed, with these warnings before us, we venture upon sin. But it

will be said, that the events which ought to warn us are out of our mind at the time. This, however, is not so. Were it that these things came to pass in the wide world only at large, it might be that we should seldom hear of them, or soon forget them. But the events take place where we ourselves are, within our own doors, in our own families ; amongst those with whom we have the most constant correspondence, the closest intimacy, the strictest connection. It is impossible to say that such events can be out of our mind ; nor is it the fact. The fact is, that, knowing them, we act in defiance of them ; which is the neglect of warnings in the worst sense possible. It aggravates the daringness ; it aggravates the desperateness of sin ; but it is so nevertheless. Supposing these warnings to be sent by Providence, or that we believe, and have reason to believe, and ought to believe, that they are so sent, then the aggravation is very great.

We have warnings of every kind. Even youth itself is continually warned, that there is no reliance to be placed either on strength or constitution or early age : that, if they count upon life as a thing to be reckoned secure for a considerable number of years, they calculate most falsely ; and if they act upon this calculation, by allowing themselves in the sins which are incidental to their years, under a notion that it will be long before they shall have to answer for them, and before that time come they shall have abundant season for repenting and amending :—if they suffer such arguments to enter into their minds, and act upon them, then are they guilty

of neglecting God in his warnings. They not only err in point of just reasoning, but they neglect the warnings which God has expressly set before them. Or, if they take upon themselves to consider religion as a thing not made or calculated for them; as much too serious for their years; as made and intended for the old and the dying; at least as what is unnecessary to be entered upon at present; as what may be postponed to a more suitable time of life; whenever they think thus, they think very presumptuously. They are justly chargeable with neglected warnings. And what is the event? These postponers never enter upon religion at all, in earnest or effectually. That is the end and the event of the matter. To account for this, shall we say, that they have so offended God by neglecting his warnings, as to have forfeited his grace? Certainly we may say that this is not the method of obtaining his grace, and that his grace is necessary to our conversion. The neglecting of warnings is not the way to obtain God's grace; and God's grace is necessary to conversion. The young, I repeat, want not warnings. Is it new? Is it unheard of? Is it not, on the contrary, the intelligence of every week, the experience of every neighbourhood, that young men and young women are cut off? Man is, in every sense, a flower of the field. The flower is liable to be cut down in its bloom and perfection, as well as in its withering and its decay. So is man; and one probable cause of this ordination of Providence is, that no one of every age may be so confident of life as to allow himself to transgress God's laws: that all of every age may live in constant awe of their Maker.

will see and regret the imperfection of their former views: they will lament that they bestowed so large a share of their thoughts and affections upon this passing scene, so small a portion upon God, and upon that future state, in which they are to exist for ever.

The best of us, when, towards the close of life, he looks back upon the past, will discover too many things of which he has reason to be ashamed. Be it ours so to live, that the painful recollections which shall then force themselves upon our minds may be as few as possible. Be it ours to make the belief—that the preparation for the next life, is the great, the paramount business of the present—not merely the professions of our lips, but the ruling principle of our practice. Armed with this belief, and relying on the support of Him, whose strength is made perfect in weakness, we may hope to be carried safe through the dangers and temptations by which we are surrounded; and having thus preserved a conscience void of offence, may, when we shall be summoned from the world, assure our hearts before God, in humble confidence, that he will accept us through his beloved Son.

CHRISTIAN WATCHFULNESS.

[REV. THOMAS AINGER.]

HOW important and how impressive is the warning conveyed in those remarkable words of our Saviour,—“What I say unto you, I say unto all,—Watch !” How characteristic of the wisdom of Him who knew the weakness of man’s best resolutions, and who not only called his disciples to repentance for the sins which they had committed, but taught them how they might keep his commandments for the future, and walk in newness of life. It is by our perseverance in a Christian course that the reality of our profession is proved ; and for this end continual vigilance is indispensable. A deep impression may be made on the soul, but it may soon pass away again and be forgotten. We may put forth a strong effort to release ourselves from the bondage of evil habits, and may soon relapse into the course we had abjured. The visitations of sickness or affliction, or some more signal interposition of Providence in our behalf, may for a while arouse us from our lethargy, and we may sink again, as though no such warning had been vouchsafed. Sometimes, indeed, an entire change of heart and of life may be dated from such circumstances as these ; but there are too many examples to prove that such is very far from being generally the case. Hear the resolutions of the sick man, who believes himself to be lying upon his death-bed ; and behold the con-

duct of the same man restored once more to health, and mingling again in the business of society. It is not in a few solemn thoughts, abiding but for a season, that the essential part of real conversion consists; it is not in a state of spiritual alarm, which may be quieted again by vain and unsubstantial pretences; it is not in a mind which is agitated by the remembrances of past sins, and by agonizing anxiety for the future safety of the soul: and which may soon be occupied by the schemes of traffic and the delusions of pleasure; but it is shown in our daily practice, in the fruits of a godly conversation, in the denial of our besetting sins, in the reformation of our habits, in the discipline of our tempers, whether we have indeed been "turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

It was the assurance of a future day of retribution, and the uncertainty when that day should arrive, which our Saviour proposed to his apostles as an all-sufficient inducement to perseverance in the spiritual discipline of their own hearts and lives, and in the unceasing fulfilment of the special duties which belonged to their arduous office.

And do we, in our times, stand in less need of some constraining principle to uphold our goings in the path of Christian duty, that our footsteps slip not? Are our principles stronger, or our spiritual resources mightier, or our temptations less deceitful or less attractive? What our Lord said to the apostles, he said unto all,—“Watch.” Do we obey the precept? Do we keep a guard over ourselves? Do we avoid every occasion of sin? Do we examine

and prove our spirits, and see whether they be such as become the followers of Jesus Christ?

That we may really become acquainted with the process which is going on within our minds,—that we may be enabled to judge whether we are advancing or retrograding in the course of Christian sanctification,—that the work of circumspection and watchfulness may be effectually and profitably executed,—it is above all things necessary, that we have fixed periods and fixed methods for examining ourselves. Let something of this kind precede our daily evening prayers; let us recall the transactions in which we have been engaged, and the motives by which we have been guided: and so judging ourselves, that we be not judged of the Lord, we may be enabled to make a more particular confession of our errors, infirmities and sins; and gratefully to acknowledge the grace by which we have been upheld. This trial of ourselves will be no great tax upon either our memory or our time: it will give an earnestness and an interest to our private devotions, which will prevent them from degenerating into a mere lip-service; it will prove our best security, under God's grace, against the formation of evil habits.

But besides this system of *daily* self-examination, it will be necessary occasionally to take a larger space of time under review, that by comparing ourselves with ourselves, we may determine whether we are better prepared for death and judgment, the nearer they approach. For this, also, there should be a fixed time; else there is too much reason to

fear, that it will be neglected entirely. The commencement of a new year; the recurrence of a birth-day; the anniversary of the death of a parent, of a child, or of a dear friend; these, and other occasions of a like nature, calculated to suggest serious thoughts, may be very fitly appropriated to the fulfilment of this duty. It may be a labour of disappointment and humiliation. Be it so! Surely it is far better that we should discover ourselves *now*, while the mis-spent time may yet be redeemed, and the soul rescued from the snares of the destroyer, than that we should defer it, till it may become impracticable or ineffectual. The mind unused to meditate upon holy things cannot at once turn from the vanities of earth, to the awful realities of eternity. The failing memory,—the bewildered understanding,—the weakness and the pains of the diseased body,—all are against us! We cannot at such an hour put on the whole armour of God; for we have not proved the weapons! The time of our dismissal is at hand; we cannot commence the duties of the active sentinel! The Lord standeth at the door and knocketh; and we have just awaked to learn that the period appointed for our service is over! God grant that we may be wise *in time*! God grant that the warning of our Master may not have been given us in vain,—“What I say unto you, I say unto all, —Watch!”

DOMESTIC PEACE AND HAPPINESS.

[REV. H. H. MILMAN.]

IN every relation of domestic life, whether nearer or more remote, if differences of opinion should arise, as sometimes they will unavoidably arise, few can have studied human nature so imperfectly as not to have discovered that the peaceful influence of the kind and gentle, is more efficacious than the angry vehemence of the intemperate. Supposing that we feel, without any improper or unbecoming assumption of superiority, the painful conviction that the Christianity of our dearest and most intimate friends is defective. Be assured that men judge, in general, according to the Scriptural precept *of the tree by its fruits*. The noiseless and unpretending exercise of the Christian virtues, will work with tenfold greater force than the repeated argument or the earnest exhortation. Excepting, or scarcely perhaps excepting, the miracles wrought by our Lord and his apostles, the lives of the early Christians were the most effective means of the conversion of the world. The sudden change of so many of all orders from cruelty and licentiousness, and ungodliness, to humanity, to purity, to rational piety, through the blessed hope of everlasting life in Christ Jesus, was the great standing miracle of God's grace and power. It was the harmony, the peace, and the holiness of Christian families, which extorted by degrees the homage, and even at length the imitation of mankind.

When it was seen how entirely Christian brethren

became brethren ; how Christianity sanctified every natural duty, and warmed, as it were, the blood of kindred to each other ; how, wherever the ties of tender relationship existed, it wound them more closely around the heart, and when they were severed by inevitable death, spoke the consolatory assurance of a better and more enduring world, in which earthly attachments *might* revive for an eternal duration, men began to acknowledge that they *hated* the Master and the faith alike, *without a cause*.

The promise made to the Christian not merely of the world that is to come, but of that likewise which now is, was not without clear and intelligible meaning. If, then, the members of a Christian family, instead of harassing each other with unnecessary disputation, would take the apostle's explicit advice, in provoking " each other to good works ;" instead of vying in the knowledge of doubtful points, would vie in the exercise of the acknowledged Christian virtues, we should not apprehend the possibility of the misapplication of our text. We say not that any point of Christian knowledge, or any part of religious practice, can be entirely unimportant, but we may say that there are few of such importance as for an instant to demand the sacrifice of Christian love, Christian meekness, and Christian forbearance.

There are, even in the apostle's estimation, difficult and doubtful points in Christianity : there must be till we have more than the understanding, and holiness as perfect as that of the angels. But it is impossible to misapprehend the meaning of the simple precepts in the apostolic writings, which enjoin both

the particular relative duties of different ages and different classes of society, and the general spirit of meekness and charity, without which, though "we understand all mysteries and all knowledge, though we give our body to be burned, it profiteth nothing." That Christianity which, by any delusion, however apparently accordant with the language of Scripture, engenders in the heart a spirit of pride, and therefore of strife and dissension, belies its name, betrays its carnal origin. *Without natural affection*, was one of the marks by which the apostle noted the unconverted and unregenerate world. Where natural affection does not prevail, and prevail in the highest degree, we listen not to the Scriptural language which may be for ever upon the lips; we regard not the assertion of superior religious knowledge; we tremble rather than are convinced at the asserted or implied participation in the grace of God's Holy Spirit; and in so doing we are assured that nature, and the God of nature, the Law and the Gospel of Jesus Christ excuse, or rather imperatively enforce our apprehensions of the dangerous, the unrenewed condition of those hearts. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen," says the apostle, "how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" He who loveth not those who are more closely connected with him than by the ties of Christian brotherhood, how shall he pretend to Christian love either of man or of God?

Let us not consider the whole of Christianity to consist in those virtues, which might and did exist before the revelation through Christ; but be assured

that without those virtues, our faith in Christ is barren and ineffective, and consequently our hope in Christ without reasonable ground or warrant. "Where envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work; but the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace." And if there be a thought which may hallow, as it were, the earnestness of family devotion; if a consideration which may heighten the consolations of the Gospel in the hour of severest trial, even in the last crisis of mortality, is it not the conviction that as the members of a Christian family have embraced one faith, acknowledged one Lord, been baptized with one baptism, they may share in one hope, in one reliance for salvation on the same Redeemer; kindred in blood, kindred in affection, they may likewise be kindred in immortality?

"Behold," says the Psalmist, "how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" And how is the joy, the beauty, the sanctity of that unity, which in the Christian family may comprehend the most remote as well as the most intimate relations, the faithful servant, the "stranger that is within our gates,"—exalted and amplified by the well-grounded trust, that the society commenced on earth may be perpetuated in heaven; that the fellow pilgrims who have shared each other's joys, borne each other's sorrows, assisted each other's steps along the dangerous wilderness of life, shall enter into the same rest: that the voices which have so often united in the daily prayer may also join in the hallelujah of thanksgiving before the throne of grace!

THE IMPORTANCE OF IMMEDIATE REFORMATION.

[* * *]

TAKE the most favourable view of the case. Admit, that as you approach the boundary of all mortal things, you are thoroughly awake to a sense of your condition, and that you see the necessity of an entire change in the temper of your minds; yet changes of this kind are not, in the ordinary course of events, the work of a day, a month, or a year; still less are they brought about at the closing hour of a wasted and mis-spent life. You may grieve, you may confess your transgressions; you may deplore your habitual and determined resistance to the truth; you may offer up your prayers; but this is not repentance, the blessed repentance which will bring you effectually, as sinners, to the mercy-seat, or by which you can make your peace with Heaven; it is not the repentance which is able to correct and purify, to amend and save. If you are sincere, and have nothing else to distract you, the number and magnitude of your transgressions will arise in awful retrospect, and conscience will unfold scenes, which if you are not more or less than human, you cannot behold without amazement. "Innumerable evils have compassed me about. Mine iniquities have taken fast hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head,

therefore my heart faileth me.”* And who can understand, or who describe, the difficulties with which you will have to struggle? The power of sin has been gradually gaining ground upon you; your appetites have been growing more clamorous, your passions more headstrong and untameable; and before you can work out your redemption from this slavery, and be wholly free,—before you can number yourselves among the sons of God, and know the “joy and peace of believing,”† you must unlive your former lives, and undo all that you have done; you must not only forsake the path in which you have so long trodden, but you must measure back every false step that you have taken. The chains that years and years have riveted, must all, all be broken, and the whole of the intricate web that you have spun must be unravelled. You must imbibe new principles, and act from purer motives. You must put away anger, wrath, malice, and pride, and put on mercy, kindness and humility. A complete revolution must take place in your secret desires. In a word, you must alter your nature. I need say nothing to prove that this is of all tasks the most arduous. The little rivulet which at first constituted your only obstacle, is now increased to a mighty, tumultuous, overflowing stream. Hear in what lofty strains the contrast is described by the prophet Jeremiah: “If,” says he, “thou hast run with footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how

* Ps. xl. 12.

† Rom. xiii. 15.

canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan?"*

THE DANGERS OF DELAY.

[* * *]

AS to those who know that they are careless and indolent, to whom life has been little more than a series of fair occasions neglected and golden hours misemployed; whose affections are "of the earth earthy;" who having wandered far from God, are the slaves of sin, but in whom all sense of duty is not lost,—could any such hear my voice, I would remind them of the precious promises by which they are invited to arise and shake themselves as if from sleep, to bewail their ingratitude, to forsake every evil way, to turn unto the Lord, and to thirst for a new life. I would say to them, Be persuaded to put off no longer, what has already been put off too long. The work which you have to do is most momentous: the time is short: the day is far spent: the sun is declining: the shades of night are gathering. Yet, be ye not dismayed: rather listen to the assurances of the gospel of peace, and look up. When the sorrowing prodigal returned, "his father went out to meet him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed

* Jer. xii. 5.

him." To you, also, the gates of mercy are still open. The gracious Father of all will welcome every one who, in the true spirit of humility and faith, with weeping and mourning and well-doing, directs his steps to him. The broken-hearted, way-worn penitent, "weary and heavy laden" as he is, may yet console himself with the hope of forgiveness. At the cross of Christ, he may lay down his burden, and "find rest unto his soul."

O you who are in the flower of youth, who are just entering the busy scenes of society, and have scarcely made trial of the world's temptations or of your own weakness, devote yourselves to God ; give to him your hearts, "now while it is called to-day," now while the offering will be accepted. It is the happy season that never comes but once ; it is the morning when you have freshness for the task ; it is the time for receiving impressions in favour of piety and goodness. Young and vigorous as you are, presume not too much upon your strength ; dream not that you are safe ; "boast not of to-morrow : " the richest and most promising blossoms have often withered in the bud. I speak to you with affection. "Make speed and hasten your work ;" for the present may be the last admonition that you shall ever hear. All your capacities, all that you have, you owe to "the Father of lights, the Giver of every perfect gift." A ready and uniform obedience to his will is the most unequivocal testimony of your gratitude. Accustom yourselves to see him and to feel his presence in the diversified and beautiful productions of nature, in the works of creation above

you, and around you, and within you,—in all and over all ; and often lift up your souls before him with the holy submission and with the hope and joy of beloved children. Let the whole of life be spent in providing for a higher sphere of employment and blessedness beyond the grave. It is no impracticable advice which I give you. At all times, and in all places, you have it in your power to be thus occupied. Every act of Christian virtue and Christian holiness, no matter when or where performed ; every prayer breathed from the heart in secret and in silence ; every benevolent purpose ; every candid judgment ; every sacrifice of ease and interest to the comfort of those around you ; every effort to obtain the mastery over sense and passion and the world, will minister to the growth of that divine principle in the soul, which is the great end of all religion. Secure this ; and look forward to the result. It will bring after it a thousand and a thousand blessings. You will move on, through your pilgrimage here below, in the sweet light of heaven ; whenever the trying hour shall come, you will be well armed for the final conflict, well prepared to wrestle with the last enemy ; and I cannot tell you the glory, I cannot describe to you the happiness to which you will be advanced before the throne of God, and amidst the splendours of eternity.

LETTERS.

TO A YOUNG LADY, ON THE DEATH OF A RELATION.

[JOHN FOSTER, AUTHOR OF "ESSAYS," ETC.]

DEAR MISS CAROLINE,

I SHOULD not venture a momentary interruption of feelings, which I know must choose the pensive retirement of the heart, if I did not hope to insinuate a sentiment or two, not discordant with the tone of grief.

I am willing to believe the interest I have taken in your happiness, will authorise me to convey to you, at such a serious hour, the expressions of a friendly and solicitous sympathy. I am willing to believe that the sincere respect with which I have addressed you in serener days, will be a pledge to you, that, in assuming such a liberty, I cannot forget the delicacy of respect which peculiarly belongs to you, now you are in a scene of suffering; and that this little attention which I seem to myself to owe you, will not be deemed to violate the sacredness of sorrow.

I should be most happy, if it were possible for me to impart any influences that could alleviate the oppressions of the heart, or aid your fortitude in its severe probation. But I dare not indulge so pleasing a hope. I know too well, that suffering clings to the sufferer's self, and that any other mind, though actuated by the kindest wishes, is still a foreign mind, and inhabits a separate sphere, from which it can but faintly breathe consoling sentiments.

Yet, doubtless, there are in existence truths of sweet and mighty inspiration, which, perfectly applied, would calm your feelings, and irradiate the gloom around you. How happy were the art to steal such fire from heaven! How much I wish it yours. Yes, and there are softenings of distress, glimpses of serenity, ideas of tender enthusiasm, firm principles, sublime aspirings, to mingle with the feelings of the good in every situation. I love to assure myself, these are not wanting to you. I hope they will prolong the benignant charm of their visitation, and be at intervals closer to your heart than even the causes of sadness that environ you.

You will not, Miss C., disdain the solicitude of a sincere friend, who is interested for you while you are suffering, and loves the sensibility of which he regrets he cannot beguile the pain. I think I would be willing to feel for a season, all that you feel, in order to acquire an entire and poignant sympathy. This alone can convey the exquisite significance, the magic of soul, into the suggestions that seek to revive the depressed energy of a tender heart. I would exert the whole efficacy of a mind thus pain-

fully instructed, to soothe or to animate. I would look around for every truth, and every hope to which Heaven has imparted sweetness, for the sake of minds in grief. I would invoke whatever friendly spirit has power to shed balm on anxious or desponding cares, and, unobserved, steal a part of the bitterness away. I would also attempt a train of *vigorous thinking*. I would not despair of some advantage from the application of *reasoning*. Indeed it is known too well, there are moments when the heart refuses all control, and gives itself without reserve to grief. It feels and even cherishes emotions which it cannot yield up to any power less than that of Heaven or of time. Arguments may vainly, sometimes, forbid the tears that flow for the affecting events of remembrance or anticipation. Arguments will not obliterate scenes whose every circumstance pierced the heart. Arguments cannot recall the victims of death. Dear affections! the sources of felicity, the charm of life, what pangs too they can cause! You have loved sensibility, you have cultivated it, and you are destined yet, I hope, to obtain many of its sweetest pleasures; but you see how much it must sometimes cost you. Contemn, as it deserves, the pride of stoicism; but still there are cogent reasons why sorrow should somewhere be restrained. It should acknowledge the limits imposed by judgment and the will of Heaven. Do not yield your mind to the gloomy extinction of utter despondency. It still retains the most dear and valuable interests, which require to be saved from the sacrifice. Before the present circumstances took

place, the wish of friendship would have been, that you might be long happily exempted from them ; *now* it is that you may gain from them as high an improvement and a triumph as ever an excellent mind won from trial. From you an example may be expected of the manner in which a virtuous and thoughtful person has learnt to bear the melancholy events of life. Even at such a season, it is not a duty to abandon the study of happiness. Do not altogether turn away from sweet hope, with her promises and smiles. Do not refuse to believe that this dark cloud will pass away, and the heavens shine again,—that happier days will compensate these hours that move in sadness. Grief will have its share, a painful share, but grief will not have your all, Caroline : there is good in existence still, rich, various, endless, the pursuit of which will elevate, and the attainment of which will crown you. Even your present emotions are the distresses of tender melancholy,—how widely different from the anguish of guilt ! Yours are such tears as innocence may shed, and intermingle smiles, pensive smiles indeed, and transient, but expressive of a sentiment that rises towards heaven.

The most pathetic energies of consolation can be imparted by RELIGION alone, the never-dying principle of all that is happy in the creation. The firm persuasion that all things that concern us, are completely every moment in the hands of our Father above, infinitely wise and merciful : that he disposes all these events in the very best possible manner ; and that we shall one day bless him amid the ardours

of infinite gratitude for even his most distressing visitations ; such a sublime persuasion will make the heart and the character sublime. It will enable you to assemble all your interests together, your wishes, your prospects, your sorrows, and the circumstances of the persons that are dear to you, and present them in one devout offering to the best Father, the greatest Friend ; and it will assure you of being in every scene of life the object of his kind, perpetual care.

Permit me, Madam, to add, that one of the most powerful means towards preserving a vigorous tone of mind in unhappy circumstances, is to explore, with a resolute eye, the serious lessons which they teach. Events like those which you have beheld, open the inmost temple of solemn truth, and throw around the very blaze of revelation. In such a school, such a mind may make incalculable improvements. I consider a scene of death as being to the interested parties who witness it, a kind of *sacrament*, inconceivably solemn, at which they are summoned, by the voice of Heaven, to pledge themselves in vows of irreversible decision. Here, then, Caroline, as at the high altar of eternity, you have been called to pronounce, if I may express it so, the *inviolable oath*,—to keep for ever in view the momentous value of life, and to aim at its worthiest use, its sublimest end ; to spurn, with a last disdain, those foolish trifles, those frivolous vanities, which so generally within our sight consume life as the locusts did Egypt ; and to devote yourself, with the ardour of passion, to attain the most divine improve-

ments of the human soul ; and in short, to hold yourself in preparation to make that interesting transition to another life, whenever you shall be claimed by the Lord of the world.—Yours very respectfully and affectionately,

JOHN FOSTER.

Bristol.

TO A FRIEND, ON THE DEATH OF HIS
WIFE.

[REV. ROBERT HALL.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I CANNOT express the emotions of soul which I felt on receiving from your valuable son an account of the death of his dear mamma. I often realize in my mind, and think I see you in various postures, and with indications of heartfelt sorrow and pungent perplexity.

Oh ! the piercing pangs of grief attending such a separation ! They cannot be expressed, nor *pictured*, but in idea. I *have* felt, I daily feel for you and your dear children ; your and their loss is great indeed. More—Yet, stop, my friend,—the sluices of sorrow ought not to be kept open, but the torrent of grief abated, lest it swell beyond the bounds of Christian moderation, and overwhelm the soul.

How favourable to mourners is the blessed gospel ! Gaze not, therefore, on the dark side of the cloud :

the dark and sable dispensation is tinged with radiant beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and portends a glorious coming day. Could you hear this dear departed spirit, her language would be, "Refrain from tears, I am well, weep not for me."

Consider, my dear friend, He who gave her, reserved a superior right to her. This she sweetly acquiesced in; and though she gave herself to you for a time, yea, till time with her should be no more, she gave herself to the Lord in an everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten.

My friend, you will likewise consider, that you and she are not far separated; for, although all communication be now broken off, you are yet, and will for ever continue, in the same house, even the house of mercy,—that divine, capacious, and beautiful structure which Jehovah hath said, "shall be built for ever." In that house are many mansions; we are in the lower apartments, while she is gone to the large upper room, where Jesus keeps the feast with his disciples; and by and by, I hope the Lord will give us a gracious beckon, and say, "Come up hither."

You know, Sir, it is an evil time. A gloomy prospect attends the land; her righteous soul may, in mercy, be taken from the evil to come. However, it is in the Lord's hands, who says, "Be still, and know that I am God!" Difficulties and increasing cares, it is true, devolve upon you; but know that the Lord is all-sufficient. It makes not much difference whether burdens be lessened or increased, if strength be in exact proportion; and he who can-

not lie, hath said, "My strength hath been perfected in thy weakness;" and "as thy day is, so shall thy strength be."

Creatures are like candles, very useful, and always most prized when the sun is absent; but if he arise, we can then do without them. May the Lord arise, and shine, and his glory light upon you and yours. As death does not separate from the Lord, neither does it divide the saints from one another. Your spirit and hers daily meet at the one throne—she to praise, you to pray; therefore, in that sense, though you be absent in body, you are present in spirit, and after a while you will meet in person to part no more; for "those who sleep in Jesus will the Lord bring with him." In the meantime, we are called to walk by faith, and not by sight: and he in whom we may safely confide, hath declared, "all things work together for good." It was a reconciling thought to me in great trouble, that afflictions are compared in Scripture to workmen, all employed and busy in the Christian's behalf. They work for you,—it might have been against you, as it frequently is found. They work together, not separately, but in happy harmony. I then thought, the more the better, if God direct and point out their employment; for the end to be accomplished is, a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." As persons take pleasure in reviewing the industrious workmen, so the Christian, with Paul, may rejoice not only in the Lord, but in his tribulation also,—
"I take pleasure in afflictions also."

If God send a great affliction, (thought I,) we may

then consider it as a fresh workman engaged in our favour ; and not only so, but look upon it as one who, in consequence of singular strength, will dispatch business (though of a heavy nature,) at a greater pace. Thus, those for whom they are employed, will grow rich at last.

Among others, let patience have her perfect work ; she is a pensive, but a precious grace. Have likewise labours abundant in the Lord. Desire goes in search after celestial productions ; Hope stands on tiptoe to view them ; and Faith goes to receive them and bring them home. Thus the “just shall live by faith ;” for what faith brings, love cordially receives, and volition bids it welcome. Joy sings and makes sweet melody, peace possesseth, rest receives, and fear causeth to quake, and jealousy to tremble. How well is it for the soul when tribulation worketh for her, and when every grace is active in her ! Angels encamp about her, and God rejoiceth in her to do her good.

I would not be tedious—excuse my prolixity. I remain your affectionate and sympathising friend, and, I hope, brother, in the kingdom and patience of Christ Jesus,

ROBERT HALL.

Leicester.

TO MR. —, ON THE DEATH OF HIS
MOTHER.

[* * *]

MY DEAR SIR,

October 10th, 1835.

I HAVE been informed of the sad bereavement with which it has pleased God to visit you ; and I have too lively a recollection of all the kindnesses that I have received at your hands, to satisfy myself without assuring you of my sincere condolence. You have lost an indulgent mother—your fondest, your first earthly friend—who smiled upon your cradle, and held you in her arms, and listened to your cries, and nurtured you in her bosom, when you were a little child ; and who, in every period of your life, through the whole of your progress in the world, has never, whether in your joys or in your sorrows, looked upon you with any feeling but that of unutterable affection. You have reason to be cast down. You would be a stranger to the common sensibilities of our nature if you were not to mourn. We are forbidden to murmur and complain ; but we are nowhere forbidden to weep. God will forgive your tears. At the same time, your consolations are rich and sacred. It is your privilege, I am sure, to appropriate to yourself all the comfort with which the heart of an ever-dutiful child can soothe its grief. How touching is the representation given us in the Hebrew Scriptures of the filial piety of Solomon ! We are told that

when his mother drew near to plead with him, he rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for her on his right hand.* And it may bring a sweet pleasure to your mind to remember, that you too have never been wanting in delicate and respectful attentions to your mother. She has invariably been the object of your tenderest gratitude. You have done all you could to make her some return, an adequate return it was impossible to make her, for the thousand, thousand cares and anxieties that she has known for you.

Though you may lament your separation from her, forget not that the separation is only for a season. Let "the future brighten on your sight." Fulfil her wishes, consecrate your powers to God, and ere long, in a better and happier scene, in your Heavenly Father's courts, you will be re-united to her, and to those who, like her, have been dear to you as your own soul; and not only will you bear a part in their adoring song of triumph over death, but you will be a sharer with them in their blessedness and in their immortal ministry of love.

It is not a vision of romance that I describe. Oh no! It is a doctrine clothed with divine authority: it is a truth written in the word of God, and in the principles, powers, and impulses of the heaven-born spirit within us.

That will indeed be "a land of pure delight." In the prospect of it many a Christian, under the

* 1 Kings ii. 19.

burden, and amidst the trembling infirmities, of earth, has been ready to exclaim,

“ Welcome sweet hour of full discharge,
That sets my longing soul at large ;
Unbinds my chain, breaks up my cell,
And gives me with my God to dwell.”*

Adieu! my dear friend. Present my best regards to Mrs. —, and believe me to be, ever yours,

* * *

TO MRS. —, ON THE DEATH OF HER
DAUGHTER.

[* * *]

MY DEAR MRS. —,

August 24th, 1827.

IF, in this sad and trying hour, I knew what words would most faithfully convey to you the expression of the sincerest and tenderest sympathy, I would employ them.

Another light in which you were accustomed to rejoice, has been quenched at your side ; you have lost another dutiful child ; who, while her health was spared to her, diffused animation and cheerfulness over every circle in which she moved, and who, during her long decline, gave ample and affecting testimony that, with her, religion was not merely

* Doddridge.

an assent of the understanding, but a deep and operative persuasion of the heart. She acquainted herself with her heavenly Father, and found that his promises which—to use the emphatical language of Scripture—“are yea and amen,” had power to sustain, to soothe, to guide, and to satisfy the soul. He answered her dying prayer, and was nigh, the Great Shepherd, with his rod and his staff, to comfort her.

To those who admired and loved her, the change has been most appalling; to her it has doubtless been pre-eminently happy. On her account, therefore, though the bonds of nature cannot be rent asunder without occasioning great distress, your sorrow may be turned into joy. Her angel spirit has fled to the bosom of her God, its congenial home. And, oh! what a blessing is it that you can muse on the train of beautiful reflections and on the treasure of glorious hopes which she has left you.

I affectionately commend you and Mr. —, and those around you, to the gracious care of that Being who never forsakes even the most desolate and afflicted. He chastens us because we are his children. May His mercy descend as the dew upon your drooping hearts, to refresh and strengthen them! Believe me to be, my dear Madam, yours, with unfeigned regard,

* * *

TO MR. —, ON THE DEATH OF HIS
DAUGHTER.

[* * *]

MY DEAR MR. —,

June 6th, 1834.

A LETTER received this morning informs me of the melancholy event which has at length realized all your fears; and language can ill describe the tenderness with which I think of you, and Mrs. —, and the rest of your afflicted family. Yours is no ordinary bereavement. You have lost a most amiable and dutiful child, “your heart and your heart’s joy,”—one who found her happiness, from her earliest years, in cultivating the benevolent and generous affections, and who never admitted of any competition in her mind between the considerations of selfishness and opportunities of doing good. The beautiful vision is fled. Her brief days are gone. She has been called away in the midst of her loveliness; with all the sweet promises of life opening around her, and in circumstances which teach us that this world is only a fleeting show, and that we ought to possess the comforts that we find in it as if we possessed them not.

I know how hard you have felt it to yield her up; and I also know that you will have recourse to the rock that never can be shaken. I pray that God would fill you with peace, and enable you to bear your severe trial with unquestioning resignation to his will. It is thus that he works his own great ends.

There are, indeed, many reasons why you should lift up your head and wipe away your tears. It must soothe you to reflect that the dear loved object for whom you mourn, is not now exposed to the changes of mortality,—that pain and languor can oppress her no more,—that she is taken from you to be happy for ever. Though the grass and the flowers will grow over her grave, Faith bids you look forward to a day,—oh, what a day of surprising wonder and ecstasy to you!—when you will meet her again, in the kingdom of the everlasting Father, where the obscurities of our present state shall be scattered, where there shall be no night, neither any darkness at all!

“That life,” said one of the most eloquent writers of a former age, “is not best which is longest; and when young persons have descended into the grave, it shall not be inquired how long they lived, but how well.”*

I should be truly glad, my dear Sir, if even at this distance and in this seclusion, I were able to suggest any thing that might afford you comfort. But my heart is full. A thousand and a thousand unutterable recollections come crowding upon me, and I can only breathe a prayer to the throne of mercy that your sorrow may be softened and sanctified and blessed.

With feelings of the warmest and kindest regard to Mrs. — and to all the members of your family, I remain, my dear Mr. —, ever most affectionately yours,

* * *

* Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living*, p. 137, edit. 1695.

TO MR. —, ON THE AWFULLY SUDDEN
DEATH OF HIS BROTHER.

[* * *]

MY DEAR SIR,

April 28th, 1832.

YOU know that when I resided in your neighbourhood, I never was a careless spectator of your sorrows ; and I shall not attempt to tell you how much I am concerned to hear of the sad bereavement which has again torn your bosom with anguish, and bowed you down to the dust. Oh, you may well mourn, you may well weep, that one in whose tried and faithful affection you could so securely trust, one who was so single-hearted, so kind and affectionate, so generous, so steady in principle, and so rich in domestic and social happiness, should be thus hurried away in the vigour of life, in the maturity of his understanding, and in the midst of his virtues, his activity, and his enjoyments !

This is a dispensation which strikes us with awe, and baffles all our conjectures ; though the purposes of God have doubtless been those of mercy both towards the dead and towards the living. As Milton sublimely says ;

How oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark, does heaven's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his glory unobscured.

To you and to those around you, the change has been unutterably awful ; but who that is in any de-

gree acquainted with the character of your excellent brother, can for a moment hesitate to believe that it has been glorious and blessed to him? Who can doubt, that, through the loving-kindness of his God, he is gone to receive a bright reward? He will come no more among you upon earth;—you will listen in vain for the bound of his footsteps and the accents of his voice;—in this mortal state, you will never again behold him; it is a comfort, however, to think that he lived the life of a Christian: and in his most engaging example, he has bequeathed to you an inheritance compared with which, power, wealth, and earthly dignities, are as nothing in the scale.

A few short days will pass, and we shall all assemble in the world of spirits; and oh! with what astonishment, with what holy rapture, if we should find mercy to pity and forgive us, shall we again embrace the objects of our fondness, and join with them, before the eternal throne, in celebrating our deliverance from the bondage of the grave!

It is when “the light is darkened in our tabernacle,” it is in circumstances of deep, heart-rending affliction, it is amidst those sad and sudden reverses, when our anticipations and our joys are scattered to the winds as in scorn, that we *feel* the value of our Christian hopes; it is when the hand of the Most High presses heavily upon us, that the truths of revelation are doubly dear to our souls.

In events like this there is a startling voice which it would be madness to disregard. Oh, let it not speak in vain! It reminds us that we ourselves cannot escape the universal law. It admonishes us to

transfer our thoughts, our cares, our affections, our hopes from vain and momentary, to everlasting objects. It conjures us to redeem the time, to reach forward to new attainments in truth and goodness, and to expedite our work.

Remember me most affectionately to all your mourning circle, and, in particular, should you have a favourable opportunity, to poor Mrs. —. You will believe me that, in these dark melancholy hours, she is often present to my mind. Great as her trial is, I pray that she may be enabled to support it. May that Almighty Being who is the friend of the widow, even God in his holy habitation, keep her under the shadow of his wings, and fill her soul with pious trust and love! He has said, "When thou passest through the fire, I will be with thee, and when through the floods, they shall not overflow thee."

It was kind in you, at a season of such distress, to call me to your recollection, and to write to me. You know how to touch my heart. I hope your sweet children are still a comfort and a blessing to you. Ever yours, with unalterable attachment,

* * *

TO MR. —, ON THE DEATH OF HIS
BROTHER.

[* * *]

MY DEAR SIR,

October, 1st 1835.

I HEARD some weeks ago, with deep concern, that your brother was an invalid, and my mind was prepared for serious apprehensions; but as I had no idea that he was so soon to close the scene, I cannot tell you how much the sad intelligence conveyed in your letter, startled and distressed me. We are human beings, and we naturally grieve when even the least of our comforts are taken from us; what then, under such a bereavement as this, must be the poignancy of your sorrow?

Your brother's character was beautiful in the extreme. I had the means beyond those which most persons enjoyed of estimating his worth; and I affectionately loved him. In the sunshine and in the shade, in weal and in woe, he was the same, always sincere, always ingenuous, always kind. None of his fellow creatures were so fallen or in so low a condition as to be beneath his sympathy; he was never weary of speaking the words of peace and encouragement to the unhappy.

You have reason to be deeply grateful for having had such a brother: and amidst your tears and your regrets, you can dwell with a melancholy delight on the remembrance of what he was,—on his habitual, his earnest piety, on his strength of principle, on his

serene and heavenly temper, on the rich endowments of his mind, and on those noiseless, unobtrusive, meek and gentle virtues with which he adorned his Christian profession, and which won their way, and made him inexpressibly dear, to the hearts of all who knew him.

You cannot but be soothed by the consciousness of having invariably treated him with more than a brother's respect and tenderness; for "there is a comfort in the strength of love." His hours of pain and weakness are now over; he has crossed the gloomy stream. He "died in the full assurance of hope." For him the final conflict had no terrors; he had overcome the fear of death; he could view the grave as an entrance to the light of eternal day. Some wise and eminent Christians have found this to be a difficult task. It is related of Bishop Butler, the author of "The Analogy," that in his last hours he said to his chaplain, "Though I have endeavoured to avoid sin and to please God to the utmost of my power, yet in the consciousness of perpetual infirmity, I am still afraid to die." "My Lord," observed the chaplain, "you forget that Jesus Christ is the Saviour." "True," was the answer, "but how shall I know that he is a Saviour for me?" "My Lord," rejoined the chaplain, it is written, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.' "True," said the bishop, his countenance brightening as he spoke, "and I am surprised that, though I have read that Scripture a thousand times, I never felt its value till this moment, and now I die happy."

It has been your lot, my dear Sir, in a compara-

tively short space of time to follow to the tomb in succession those who were long the objects of your warmest earthly gratitude and affection, the dear companions of your path, the pride and the solace of your home. Your trials have indeed been severe ; but I am sure I need not remind you of the domestic comforts, unspeakably precious, which still remain to you, or of the animating hopes which believers in the gospel are permitted to indulge. We are not left to wander in uncertainty as to a life to come ; it is no longer a conjecture or a vague desire. Immortality is the glorious discovery of Jesus Christ, and did his gospel contain no other truth, this alone would be sufficient to cast into the shade and reduce to comparative nothingness all that science and philosophy have ever been able to achieve. The proof of it, moreover, is suited to every understanding.

The graves of all his saints He blest,
And soften'd every bed ;
Where should the dying members rest,
But with their dying Head ?*

Present my kindest regards to Mrs. —, and
accept of my best wishes for your children.

Adieu ! my poor heart-stricken friend !

Ever affectionately and sincerely yours,

* * * *

* Watts.

TO A FRIEND IN VERY DEEP AFFLICTION.

[REV. J. ALLEN.]

MY DEAR —.

PERMIT a sincere friend to offer you his sympathies, and to condole with you in this season of deep distress. I would, if possible, say something that may assuage the anguish of your grief. Do not, I entreat you, refuse to receive consolation, nor sink under the burden which your Heavenly Father has laid upon you. Do not say, "My sorrow is greater than I can bear." Pray unto God earnestly, humbly pray, that he would sustain you and comfort you; and doubt not that your prayer will be answered. He looks upon you with tender compassion and love, and waiteth to be gracious unto you. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace." — "Cast your cares on him, for he careth for you." — Yes, "as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Let your afflictions draw you near to him, your best, your all-sufficient, your never-failing friend. Let him be the object of your supreme affection, and of your unbounded trust:

That friend who never fails the just,
Though other friends betray their trust.

He has indeed grievously afflicted you; "lover and friend has he put far from you, and your ac-

quaintance into darkness;" and in deep anguish, you are ready to exclaim; "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye, my friends! for the hand of God hath touched me." Your friends do, indeed, pity you; but they are anxious that you should do what is right. Is there no danger lest you should indulge your feelings too far; and by abandoning yourself to despair, not only lose the benefits which your afflictions are designed to produce, but displease that righteous and all-perfect Being, who, in his mysterious providence, has seen fit once and again to disappoint your youthful hopes? Oh, do not, my friend, allow yourself to question, for one moment, the rectitude, and wisdom, and kindness,—yes, the kindness of all his ways. Bow with meekness before him; or, as it is expressed in the words of inspiration, "Humble thyself under the mighty hand of God, and he will exalt thee in due time."

I do not ask you not to weep. Religion does not require you to lay this restraint upon your feelings. Your heart would break, should you not weep. Jesus wept; and his example we may safely follow. I am sensible that you have cause to weep, that your grief is very great, almost insupportable. But do not shut your heart against the consolations of Christianity. That same compassionate Saviour who wept at the tomb of his friend, and who "hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,"—still lives, and his tender heart still feels for us. He feels for you, and proffers you his sympathy and aid in this hour of darkness. To you those charming words are addressed; "Come unto me all ye who are weary

and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Do you not now feel your need of other supports than this world can give? Oh, then, come unto Jesus; take his yoke upon you, and learn of him, and you shall find rest to your soul. He will teach you how to bear your afflictions, and how to improve them, so that they may be converted into blessings. Yes, one of his inspired apostles has said, "Although no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards, it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." And he himself has said, "I am the resurrection and the life; whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."—"Sorrow not, then, as those who have no hope; for if we believe," thus the apostle addresses his afflicted friends, "that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him." Think not of your beloved friend merely as the cold tenant of the tomb. His mortal part indeed is there; but his spirit is gone to God who gave it.

Let your thoughts, then, be directed to the world of spirits. Let your affections, which have clung, perhaps too fondly, to earthly objects, be set on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Remember that one thing is needful; and let it be your first, your chief concern, to choose and to secure that good part which cannot be taken away from you. Your affectionate friend, J. ALLEN.

FROM DR. BALFOUR, AFTER THE DEATH
OF HIS ONLY SON. *

DEAR SIR,

Glasgow, August 17, 1766.

I BEG you will let me know particularly how you and Mrs Dennison are. I can say with truth, that from the moment of receiving the severe shock, an anxiety about you all has mixed itself with my tears and prayers. If my intended visit is on any account, or in any way, disagreeable, fully tell me ; for nothing is more remote from my mind than giving the least pain to any one of you. So far am I from looking with an evil eye at —, as the cause of my distress, the loss of my dear boy appears to be attended with many alleviating circumstances, which probably could not have been the case any where else. The time, the divinely appointed time, was come for his removal from the tender embraces of a fond parent. And since this was the divine will, I dare not say, unkind or unjust, of his and my Father in heaven, I adore and bless his name for enabling me to acquiesce with perfect satisfaction in his sovereign will. I knew this high and unsearchable will of God took effect amidst all that immediate attention which a parent's eye, a parent's hand, a parent's breast could have thought of for his safety. Instead,

* Dr. Balfour was, for many years, an eminent divine in the Church of Scotland. His son was drowned while on a visit at the house of Mr. Dennison, the friend to whom this admirable letter is addressed.

therefore, of one reflection, I now most sincerely give, and if able, will in person give, with my whole heart, the most grateful acknowledgments to you, and all about your house, for flying to the instant relief of my perishing child; that lady first. And the good God, who frustrated all these kind and friendly endeavours, which I shall never forget, has taught me, and will teach you, "he does all things well," according to the counsel of his own will! I greatly feel for the deep distress it has brought upon you, and worthy Mrs. Dennison, because you participate so much in my sorrow.

I wish now, my dear friend, to set before you some of the consolations, which have relieved my otherwise sorrowful spirits. The God who has visited me with this sore calamity, has, I assure you, been to me a God of all comfort! When afflictions abound, his consolations are made much more to abound; he has comforted me by fixing my attention on his divine perfections, his glorious gracious character, design, and relations. I see there can be no error, or rashness, in any part of infinite wisdom; nor cruelty, nor unkindness in the intention of Him, who is righteous, and good and merciful.

I hope that you, Mrs. Dennison, will not be afraid to meet me. I shall endeavour to cheer you with the consolations which are in Jesus Christ. They are strong, everlasting; and when the streams of worldly comfort are dried up, whither should we go, but to the comforts of divine love and faith? This is a fountain, which pours forth its gracious influence, adapted to all our situations. This dispensation is to teach us the vanity of this life, and

the temporary nature of all earthly joy. What is this world, with all its riches, honours, pleasures and connections, without God for ever? What with his blessed presence, can we want, that is good for us? Though our house be not so with God, he hath made with us an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. We may well add, "This is all our salvation and all our desire;" and with the prophet Habakkuk, "Although the fig-tree should not blossom, yet we will rejoice in the God of our salvation." Oh, how divine is that religion, that presents such truths to the mind! how solacing are its comforts! Let us look forward to the bright morning of the resurrection, which will turn all our sorrow into joy: then shall our companions in the faith and patience of Jesus Christ appear with him in glory. How wondrously changed their forms! No more corruption; no more tendency to disease or death; no possibility of any future separation; shining forth in all the perfections of unfaded beauty, spotless purity, and immortal honour. The unfolded mystery of redemption, and the glory of their Saviour, will open, and show them such resplendent surveys of grace and greatness, as shall more than satisfy them with regard to past events; the most overwhelming and confounding, will fill them with eternal admiration. I trust you will not be offended at the freedom and earnestness, with which a friend, more than ever concerned for your best interests, has written.

Be assured, I sincerely wish for you, health, prosperity, and every good thing.

FROM * * *, ON THE DEATH OF HIS
FATHER.

How the world falls to pieces all around,
And leaves us but the ruin of our joys !

MY DEAR S.,

March 20th, 1837.

I HAD just taken up my pen this morning, to write to you, when I received your letter. And has my poor father indeed breathed his expiring sigh ? And am I, in this world, to see him no more ?—no more to be gladdened by his smile ?—no more to hear his instructive voice ?—But, I will restrain myself, and endeavour to pour out my heart in thankfulness that, I have been blessed with such a father,—a father who was so indulgent, so enlightened, so upright, so generous,—in whom the richest moral and intellectual qualities were so harmoniously blended,—whose mind was so fruitful in expedients for doing good,—and who endeared himself, so far beyond the common lot, to all who knew him, making “every place a home, and every home a heaven,” and raising the song of praise in the abodes of sorrow.

He is not lost, but gone before. Oh, no ! He is not lost. The hour that shall restore him to our embrace is at hand. Yet a little while, and this dream of life will be over with us all ; then, if faith and repentance have been in lively exercise, we shall meet him again ;—yes, we shall meet him again, and dwell with him for ever.

Now he is taken from amongst us, it soothes and comforts me more than words can express, to think that I recently visited him. When I left him, he appeared to me to be upon the threshold of eternity. I felt that he was giving me his blessing for the last time; it went to my inmost soul. The awful solemnity of that moment will never, never be forgotten.

Assure —, of my sincere, grateful attachment. It has been her privilege to render the declining years of my beloved father's pilgrimage, his best, his happiest years; and she has a sweet, an appropriate reward in her own bosom.

I am persuaded, my dear S., that you will fondly cherish the remembrance of one whose delight it was to watch over you, and who, from the days of your earliest childhood, has been every thing to you. He has bequeathed to you his fine example. Lay it up, I beseech you, I earnestly beseech you, among your choicest, your most precious treasures. It will furnish you, as often as you muse upon it, with fresh encouragements to a life of virtuous and useful activity.

I long to write to you on another subject naturally dear to you, and interesting to me:—but my father, my poor father is gone!

— mingles her tender regards with mine to you all; and I remain, my dear S.,

Ever most affectionately yours,

* * *

PRAYERS.

PRAYER ON THE LOSS OF FRIENDS BY DEATH.

[* * *]

INFINITELY great and blessed God, who inhabitest eternity! Clouds and darkness are round about thee: We cannot comprehend thy ways, or fathom thy mysterious counsels: but we can approach thee in the belief that although thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, "Return, ye children of men," thy perfections are unchangeable, thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion shall have no end. The sovereign Arbiter of events, thou sittest on the circle of the earth, and judgest the nations; and all thy works are done in truth.

Thine ear is ever open unto our cry. Out of the depths of affliction we can lift up our hearts to thee. We can lay our cares and our anxieties at the foot of thy throne, persuaded that thou carest for us, and that if we seek thy face in prayer, thou wilt give peace and rest unto our souls. Thy loving-kindness and forbearance have never forsaken us; and in

thee alone, when we labour and are heavy laden with grief, we find our help.

We would gratefully own thy wisdom and goodness in all the vicissitudes with which our lives are checkered. We thank thee, the universal Parent, who hast fixed the bounds of our habitation, for the pure and exalted pleasures of domestic love, nor least of all for the happy hours which we have spent in the society of those whom thou didst raise up to rejoice in our joys and to sympathise in our sorrows, but who have finished their earthly course, rich in faith and full of hope, and are now beyond the reach of death.

Thou chastenest us with trouble, thou takest away the desire of our eyes, to remind us that upon earth there is nothing either permanent or sure; to admonish us that we are born for immortality, and that this world is not our home. We gratefully acknowledge that in our severest trials thou hast not forgotten to be gracious, but hast left us the consolations of memory and of hope, which are neither few nor small. We adore thy name for ever, that thou hast sent Jesus Christ into the world, to bring life and immortality to light, to seek and to save those that were lost. We bless thee for the assurance that He who was once despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, will appear again in majesty and power, to deliver thy children from the bondage of the grave, and to lead them, with songs of rejoicing and salvation, to thine everlasting presence.

Increase our faith, merciful God! and strengthen

our hope, that we may look forward with full persuasion and confidence to the glory of that great day when the end shall come, when the triumph of sin and death will be over, and thou wilt be all in all.

Believing that when, at thine appointed time, those in whom we have delighted, die and return unto their dust, our loss is their unspeakable gain, that they have overcome the trials and temptations of the world, and are gone to receive from thee a crown of glory,—may we strive to check the murmurs of impatience, to bow with unfeigned submission to thy will, and for the language of complaint to substitute the voice of praise.

While we dwell with mournful pleasure on the excellencies of our departed friends, we earnestly pray, O Lord! that the remembrance may comfort us in our grief, and engage us to purify our hearts during the remainder of our pilgrimage, to moderate even our innocent attachments, and to be followers of them as they were followers of Christ.

Convince us more and more, O thou God of the spirits of all men! that we are but strangers and sojourners here below, and that in a little time we too shall be gathered to our fathers. Teach us to be faithful and affectionate to the associates whom thou still preservest to us. Quicken us to greater diligence, that we may redeem with all our care the opportunities of usefulness which we have lost, and may have our lamps trimmed and our lights continually burning.

Prepare us, we beseech thee, to meet the approach of death with tranquillity and composure. At that

awful hour may our hearts be fixed, trusting in thee. Be thou still our sun and our shield. Devoutly thanking thee for the blessings with which thou hast cheered our abode on earth, and reposing a firm trust in thy promised mercy, through Jesus Christ, may we close our eyes in peace. And oh! grant, heavenly Father! that when the trumpet of the archangel shall awaken us from our slumbers in the dust, an entrance may be ministered unto us into those realms of eternal joy, where we hope to renew the tender and endearing intercourses of love, and where the pain of separation will neither be felt nor apprehended.

We would pour out our prayers at thy footstool, O thou God of consolation! for all who, like ourselves, are mourning over the ravages of mortality. Comfort and enliven their hearts; and teach them not to sorrow as others who have no hope, but to carry forward their views to a period when those who sleep in Jesus shall be for ever with the Lord.

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven; give us day by day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

ON THE LOSS OF FRIENDS BY DEATH.

[COMPILED PRAYERS :—BRISTOL, 1823.]

O THOU Father of our spirits! we would lay our hands on our mouths, and fall down now before thee, humbly to own thy sovereign right to dispose of us, and all that we have and are, as thou pleasest: we are in thy hands as the clay in the hands of the potter. May our language be, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good; the Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

We would know wherefore the Lord is contending with us. If any of us in this household are careless about our souls, Lord! awaken them from their security; may this messenger from the dead startle us effectually, and awaken us to call upon our God.

If we have lost our first love, grown lukewarm in religion, and lived too much like the generation of this world, may this providence bring us back; may we repent and do our first work, lest when our Master cometh he find us sleeping. May we all be quickened to a greater diligence, that whatsoever our hands find to do, we may do it with all our might; and be strongly moved with the affecting consideration that the night cometh wherein no man can work.

May we all keep it constantly in remembrance how short our time is, that so we may not boast ourselves of to-morrow, since we know not what a day

may bring forth ; but may we now, in this our day, mind the things which belong unto our peace before they are hidden from our eyes ; that so our last day may be our best, and the day of our death better than the day of our birth ! and may we be among those servants whom our Lord when he cometh shall find so doing, and shall pronounce blessed.

Blessed be thy name, that in this world of darkness, sorrow, and death, life and immortality have been brought to light through thy gospel ! Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.

We thank thee, O Father of mercies ! that thou hast given us such everlasting consolation through thy free grace in Christ Jesus. We will praise thy name for ever for those exceeding great and precious promises, which are our support and comfort in all the troubles of this life. Increase our faith, strengthen and confirm our hope, and raise up our spirits continually to that blessed place where Jesus is, that we may rejoice in hope of that immortal life, where all tears shall be wiped for ever from our eyes, where sighing and sorrow shall never enter, where there shall be no more death : and whither, through the riches of thy grace, we hope to follow those, who are now through their faith and patience inheriting the promises ; and to be joined again to them whose lives are now hidden in Christ ; and when Christ who is our life shall appear, to appear also

together with them in glory, and unite in praising that wise and merciful Providence, which by ways inscrutable and afflicting, has brought us into the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Keep us, O our God! in a humble, quiet, and dutiful submission to thee, waiting for that peaceful and joyful repose in the eternal rest, which thou hast prepared for them that love thee, through thy mercies in Christ Jesus; by whom all glory, love, and obedience be rendered unto thee, both now and for ever. Amen.

ON THE LOSS OF FRIENDS BY DEATH.

[REV. J. G. ROBBERDS.]

ALMIGHTY God! Thou alone art unchanging, and of thy years there is no end. In the awful presence of death, we feel our entire dependence upon thee. When man passeth away like the grass of the field, and all the glory of man like the flower thereof, we feel the value of the assurance, that thy word shall never pass away.

Our friends, our associates, are removed from us; their eyes become dim, and their voices are heard no more;—but thou remainest, to the living and the dead, the same God—the protector and father of all—faithfully keeping those whom thou takest away, and offering consolation to those who are left.

To whom but to thee shall we address ourselves in this hour of our sorrow? Blessed be thy name,

Thou biddest us not to sorrow, as men that are without hope. Blessed be thy name for the hope which we are now encouraged to cherish!

May that hope penetrate the hearts of all who are now before thee. May it extend its soothing influence to those who mourn in secret. Mercifully regard their affliction, and give them comfort.

Hear us, O God of Jesus, in the prayers which we offer up as his disciples, and through him be ascribed unto thee, at all times, and in all events, in health and in sickness, in life and in death, the kingdom, the power, and the glory. Amen.

ON THE DEATH OF A PARENT.

[REV. JOHN KENRICK.]

O THOU God of the spirits of all men, who hast endued thy rational creatures with affections and dispositions, which lead us to unite ourselves in the bonds of friendly communion and domestic love, we offer up our thanks to thee, as the source of the pure and exalted pleasures, which flow from the relations that we sustain towards each other. From Thee, the universal Parent, the Fountain of all good, who alone workest in the hearts of thy creatures both to will and to do, those influences descend, which unite the generations of men in the ties of filial and parental love. We gratefully own thy wisdom and benevolence, in having implanted in the breasts of parents, that warm and unwearied

affection, which makes them watch tenderly over the health and life of their children, and anxiously promote their present and everlasting welfare. We would acknowledge it as one of thy most precious gifts, if any of us, by the care of affectionate and virtuous relatives, have been early taught to reverence thee, to seek thy face in prayer, and to keep the way of thy commandments. While we gratefully cherish the memory of those who have been thy ministers to us for good, in disposing our hearts to piety and virtue, by the influence of affection, by precept and example, and endeavour to reward their labour of love towards us, by becoming more and more what they have taught us to be, we would raise our thoughts above all the transitory relations of earth and time, to thee, who hast given us life and all its blessings, its means of improvement, and its hopes of better things to come. O God of love and peace, do thou sanctify and bless the connexions of domestic life to those who, by the appointment of thy providence, sustain them towards each other. May parents receive from thee an understanding heart, that they may be enabled to train up their offspring in thy nurture and admonition; may children obey their parents in the Lord, that they may obtain the favour of their Father who is in heaven. May the members of every household, whom thou hast appointed to be the promoters of each other's joy, by bringing them together in the endearing relations of domestic life, fulfil the purpose for which thou hast joined them to each other; may no bitterness of anger, no proud, morose, or selfish disposi-

tions, disturb their harmony and comfort. Living together as children of the same Heavenly Parent, and travellers towards a better country, may they strive to aid each other's progress in all that is lovely and virtuous, that they may be a mutual blessing, while thou permittest them to pass the time of their sojourning together, and be re-united in a happier world, when the days of their pilgrimage are past.

O thou God of consolation, we would affectionately commend to thee all those, who are at this time suffering from the loss of valued friends and relatives snatched from them by death. While they bow in unfeigned submission to thine appointments, do thou heal the anguish of the wounded spirit with the balm of heavenly comfort. Enable them by a strong and lively faith, to lay firm hold on those glorious and consoling promises, which thou hast given by Christ Jesus, to be the support of those that mourn in Zion. May they dry their tears for their present separation from those whom they have loved, by the anticipation of that time when the friends whom death has severed from each other, shall renew those sweet intercourses in which they have delighted here, and perfect the communion of their purified spirits, in thine everlasting presence. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

[* * *]

O THOU, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; our refuge and our strength; a present help in the time of trouble! Thou knowest what things we have need of before we ask them: and whenever thy children lift up their souls unto thee, thou wilt graciously hear and bless them. Behold, thou hast made our days as a handbreadth, and our age is as nothing before thee. But while man passeth away, like the grass of the field, and all the glory of man, like the flower thereof, we are cheered by the assurance that thou art the living God. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion shall have no end. We and all that we have are at thy disposal; and it is thine to deal with us as thou pleasest. Thou takest away, who can hinder thee? who will say unto thee, What doest thou? Under the loss of the dearest objects of our affection and our hope, amidst the most trying dispensations of thy providence, enable us to feel that it is our duty to bow in humble submission to thine appointments; being persuaded that, although thy counsels are unsearchable and thy ways past finding out, thou dwellest in mercy, and thy loving-kindness is unbounded and everlasting!

We supremely rejoice that thou hast sent thy Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to disperse the gloom that overshadowed the chambers of the grave, and

to bring life and immortality to light. We adore thy name that thou hast made him our perfect guide and our all-sufficient Saviour: and we pray that in these moments of deprivation and sorrow, we may be no strangers to the consoling influence of the promises which he has set before us. Sanctify, O Lord! the hearts that mourn in secret over the remembrance of departed joys. Give light to them that sit in darkness; sweeten to them the bitter cup which thou hast put into their hands, and grant that the house of affliction may be the school of wisdom.

Convince us, Holiest of beings! that we are born for immortality; that the world is not our home; that we are travelling through these changing, transient scenes to a fairer clime:—and at last bring us to that heavenly Jerusalem, where the strength of the feeble shall be renewed, and the spirit of the weary shall be refreshed;—where the redeemed of the Lord shall meet around thy throne, to swell the anthem of thy praise, and to be separated no more.

Hear us, O Father! in these our prayers. We present them in the name of Jesus Christ; and through him we ascribe unto thee the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

H Y M N S
AND OTHER RELIGIOUS POETRY.

GOD THE LIFE OF THE SOUL.

[MRS. STEELE.]

MY God, my hope ! if thou art mine,
Why should my soul with sorrow pine !
On thee alone I cast my care ;
O, leave me not in dark despair.

Though every comfort should depart,
And life forsake this drooping heart ;
One smile from thee, one blissful ray,
Can chase the shades of death away.

My God, my life ! if thou appear,
Not death itself can make me fear ;
Thy presence cheers the sable gloom,
And gilds the horrors of the tomb.

Not all its horrors can affright,
If thou appear, my God, my light !
Thy love shall all my fears controul,
And glory dawn around my soul.

PRAISE THROUGH LIFE AND IN DEATH.

[DR. DODDRIDGE.]

GOD of my life, through all its days
My grateful powers shall sound thy praise ;
The song shall wake with opening light,
And cheer the dark and silent night.

When anxious cares would break my rest,
And griefs would tear my throbbing breast,
Thy tuneful praises raised on high,
Shall check the murmur and the sigh.

When death o'er nature shall prevail,
And all its powers of language fail,
Joy through my swimming eyes shall break,
And mean the thanks I cannot speak.

But O ! when that last conflict's o'er,
And I am chain'd to earth no more,
With what glad accents shall I rise
To join the music of the skies !

Soon shall I learn th' exalted strains
Which echo through the heavenly plains,
And emulate, with joy unknown
The glowing seraphs round thy throne.

The cheerful tribute will I give
Long as a deathless soul can live :
A work so sweet, a theme so high,
Demands and crowns eternity.

THE LORD OUR SHEPHERD.

[COTTLE.]

O LORD ! amid this desert wide
Thou art my shepherd, thou my guide,
From day to day, from year to year,
I shall not want, for thou art near.

Thou hast ten thousand gifts bestow'd,
And strew'd with flowers my mortal road !
Through pastures fair I take my way,
Or by the peaceful waters stray.

All those who call upon thy name,
Shall find thy bounty still the same ;
Goodness and mercy shall attend
The man who makes his God his friend.

And when th' appointed time shall come,
That I must seek my narrow home,
Follow, where all the prophets led,
Down to the chambers of the dead ;

Close my sad eyes on every scene,
Which once my dear delight had been :
Forsake the fair abodes of men,
And dust to dust return again ;

I will not dread, for thou art near,
Thy smile shall calm each rising fear ;
Thy rod and staff new joy impart,
And cheer with hope my fainting heart.

Confiding in Jehovah's power,
I then will meet the trying hour;
And hail with my expiring breath,
The cold and lonely vale of death.

Our fathers pass'd that gloomy road,
Awhile, our fathers there abode:
None hath in heaven his anchor cast,
Who hath not Jordan's billows past.

When death shall summon me away,
If thou but smile, my night is day.
That dark and dreary vale once trod,
And I ascend to thee, my God!

PIOUS FRIENDSHIP.

[MRS. BARBAULD.]

HOW blest the sacred tie that binds
In union sweet according minds!
How swift the heavenly course they run,
Whose hearts, whose faith, whose hopes are one!
To each the soul of each how dear!
What jealous love, what holy fear!
How doth the generous flame within
Refine from earth and cleanse from sin!
Their streaming eyes together flow
For human guilt and mortal woe;
Their ardent prayers together rise,
Like mingling flames in sacrifice.

Together both they seek the place
Where God reveals his awful face ;
How high, how strong, their raptures swell,
There's none but kindred souls can tell.

Nor shall the glowing flame expire
When nature droops her sickening fire ;
Then shall they meet in realms above,
A heaven of joy, because of love.

TO THE SUPREME BEING.

[YOUNG.]

OH, may I pant for thee in each desire !
And with strong faith foment the holy fire ;
Stretch out my soul in hope, and grasp the prize
Which in Eternity's deep bosom lies !
At the great day of recompense behold,
Devoid of fear, the fatal book unfold !
Then wafted upward to the blissful seat,
From age to age, my grateful song repeat ;
My light, my life, my God, my Saviour see,
And rival angels in the praise of thee !

THE VANITY OF WORLDLY PLEASURES.

[DR. MOORE.]

I QUIT the world's fantastic joys ;
Her honours are but gilded toys,
Her bliss an empty shade :
Like meteors in the midnight sky,
That glitter for a while and die,
Her glories flash and fade.

Let fools for riches strive and toil,
Let greedy minds divide the spoil,
'Tis all too mean for me :
Above the earth, above the skies,
My bold and fervent wishes rise,
My God ! to heaven and thee.

O Source of glory, life and love !
When to thy courts I mount above
On contemplation's wings,
I look with pity and disdain
On all the pleasures of the vain,
On all the pomp of kings.

Thy beauties rising on my sight,
Divinely sweet, divinely bright,
With rapture fill my breast ;
Though robb'd of all my worldly store,
In thee I never can be poor,
But must be ever blest.

THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE.

[COWLEY.]

MARK that swift arrow ! how it cuts the air,
How it outruns the following eyes !
Use all persuasions now and try
If thou canst call it back, or stay it there.
That way it went ; but thou shalt find
No track is left behind.
Fool ! 'tis thy life, and the fond archer thou.
Of all the time thou'st shot away,
I'll bid thee fetch but yesterday,
And it shall be too hard a task to do.
Besides repentance, what canst find
That it hath left behind ?

ADVERSITY.

[SOTHEBY.]

ADVERSITY but serves to bind
In closer union mind with mind ;
Bids each from each the pang remove,
And draws from grief the balm of love.
Thus underneath the golden sky
That smiles on blissful Araby,
The balsam's lenient tear, confined,
Sleeps in the smooth unbroken rind ;
But, kindly flowing from the wound,
Sheds life and healing fragrance round.

PROSPECT OF THE HEAVENLY
JERUSALEM.

PARAPHRASE OF CXXII. PSALM.*

[MERRICK.]

WHAT joy, while thus I view the day,
That warns my thirsting soul away ;
What transports fill my breast !
For lo ! my great Redeemer's power
Unfolds the everlasting door,
And leads me to his rest.

The festal morn, my God, is come,
That calls me to the hallow'd dome,
Thy presence to adore ;
My feet the summons shall attend,
With willing steps thy courts ascend,
And tread th' ethereal floor.

Ev'n now to my expecting eyes
The heaven-built towers of Salem rise ;
Ev'n now, with glad survey,
I view her mansions, that contain
Th' angelic forms, an awful train,
And shine with cloudless day.

* Translated from Buchanan.

Hither from earth's remotest end,
Lo! the redeem'd of God ascend,
 Their tribute hither bring :
Here, crown'd with everlasting joy,
In hymns of praise their tongues employ,
 And hail the immortal King.

Mother of cities ! o'er thy head
See Peace, with healing wings outspread,
 Delighted fix her stay !
How blest who calls himself thy friend !
Success his labours shall attend,
 And safety guard his way.

Thy walls remote from hostile fear,
Nor the loud voice of tumult hear,
 Nor war's wild wastes deplore ;
There smiling Plenty takes her stand,
And in thy courts with lavish hand,
 Has pour'd forth all her store.

Let me, blest seat ! my name behold,
Among thy citizens enroll'd,
 In thee for ever dwell :
Let Charity my steps attend,
My sole companion and my friend,
 And Faith and Hope, farewell !

DECLINING AGE AND DEATH.

[ROGERS.]

YES, there are moments which he calls his own.
Then, never less alone than when alone,

Those that he loved so long and sees no more,
Loved and still loves—not dead—but gone before,
He gathers round him, and revives at will
Scenes in his life—that breathe enchantment still—
That come not now at dreary intervals—
But where a light as from the Blessed falls,
A light such guests bring ever—pure and holy—
Lapping the soul in sweetest melancholy !
—Ah then less willing (nor the choice condemn)
To live with others than to think on them !

And now behold him up the hill ascending,
Memory and Hope like evening stars attending ;
Sustain'd, excited, till his course is run,
By deeds of virtue done or to be done.
When on his couch he sinks at length to rest,
Those by his counsel saved, his power redress'd,
Those by the world shunn'd ever as unblest,
At whom the rich man's dog growls from the gate ;
But whom he sought out, sitting desolate,
Come and stand round—the widow with her child,
As when she first forgot her tears and smiled !
They who watch by him, see not ; but he sees,
Sees and exults—Were ever dreams like these ?
They who watch by him, hear not ; but he hears,
And Earth recedes, and Heaven itself appears !

'Tis past! That hand we grasp'd, alas, in vain!
Nor shall we look upon his face again!
But to his closing eyes, for all were there,
Nothing was wanting; and, through many a year
We shall remember with a fond delight
The words so precious which we heard to-night;
His parting, though awhile our sorrow flows,
Like setting suns or music at the close.

Then was the drama ended. Not till then,
So full of chance and change the lives of men,
Could we pronounce him happy. Then secure
From pain, from grief, and all that we endure,
He slept in peace—say rather soar'd to heaven,
Upborne from earth by Him to whom 'tis given
In his right hand to hold the golden key
That opes the portals of Eternity.

—When by a good man's grave I muse alone,
Methinks an angel sits upon the stone;
Like those of old, on that thrice-hallow'd night,
Who sate and watched in raiment heavenly-bright,
And, with a voice inspiring joy, not fear,
Says, pointing upward, " Know, he is not here,
He is risen!"

THE DEATH OF A CHRISTIAN.

[BISHOP HEBER.]

THOU art gone to the grave,—but we will not
deplore thee,
Though sorrows and darkness encompass the tomb;
The Saviour has pass'd through its portals before thee,
And the lamp of his love is thy guide through the
gloom,

Thou art gone to the grave,—we no longer behold thee,
Nor tread the rough path of the world by thy side;
But the wide arms of mercy are spread to enfold thee,
And sinners may hope since the Sinless hath died.

Thou art gone to the grave,—but 'twere wrong to
deplore thee,
When God was thy father, thy guardian, thy guide:
He gave thee, and took thee, and soon will restore
thee,
Where death hath no sting, since the Saviour hath
died.

THE DEATH OF THE YOUNG MOTHER.

[POLLOK.]

IT was an April day; and blithely all
The youth of nature leap'd beneath the sun,
And promis'd glorious manhood; and our hearts
Were glad, and round them danced the lightsome
blood,

In healthy merriment—when tidings came,
A child was born ; and tidings came again,
That she who gave it birth was sick to death,
So swift trod sorrow on the heels of joy !
We gather'd round her bed, and bent our knees,
In fervent supplication to the Throne
Of Mercy ; and perfumed our prayers with sighs
Sincere, and penitential tears and looks
Of self-abasement. But we sought to stay
An angel on the earth, a spirit ripe
For heaven ; and Mercy, in her love, refused ;
Most merciful, as oft, when seeming least !
Most gracious when she seem'd the most to frown !
The room I well remember : and the bed
On which she lay ; and all the faces too,
That crowded dark and mournfully around.
Her father there, and mother bending stood,
And down their aged cheeks fell many drops
Of bitterness ; her husband, too, was there,
And brothers ; and they wept—her sisters, too,
Did weep and sorrow comfortless ; and I,
Too, wept, though not to weeping given : and all
Within the house was dolorous and sad.
This I remember well, but better still
The dying eye :—that eye alone was bright,
And brighter grew, as nearer death approach'd ;
As I have seen the gentle little flower
Look fairest in the silver beam, which fell
Reflected from the thunder-cloud that soon
Came down, and o'er the desert scatter'd far
And wide its loveliness. She made a sign
To bring her babe ;—'twas brought, and by her placed.

She look'd upon its face that neither smiled
Nor wept, nor knew who gazed upon't, and laid
Her hand upon its little breast, and sought
For it with look that seem'd to penetrate
The heavens—unutterable blessings—such
As God to dying parents only granted,
For infants left behind them in the world :
“ God keep my child !” we heard her say, and heard
No more : the Angel of the Covenant
Was come, and faithful to his promise stood,
Prepared to walk with her through death's dark vale.
And now her eyes grew bright, and brighter still,
Too bright for ours to look upon, suffused
With many tears, and closed without a cloud.
They set as sets the morning-star, which goes
Not down behind the darken'd west, nor hides
Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
But melts away into the light of heaven.

THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.

[MRS. SIGOURNEY.]

DEATH found strange beauty on that cherub brow,
And dash'd it out, There was a tint of rose
On cheek and lip ; he touch'd the veins with ice,
And the rose faded. Forth from those blue eyes
There spake a wishful tenderness,—a doubt
Whether to grieve or sleep, which Innocence
Alone can wear. With ruthless haste he bound
The silken fringes of their curtaining lids

For ever. There had been a murmuring sound,
With which the babe would claim its mother's ear,
Charming her even to tears. The spoiler set
His seal of silence. But there beam'd a smile,
So fix'd and holy, from that marble brow,—
Death gazed and left it there ; he dared not steal
The signet-ring of Heaven.

A FATHER'S GRIEF.

[THE REV. THOMAS DALE.]

TO trace the bright rose, fading fast
From a fair daughter's cheek ;
To read upon her pensive brow
The fears she will not speak ;
To mark that deep and sudden flush,
So beautiful and brief,
Which tells the progress of decay—
This is a Father's grief.

When langour from her joyless couch,
Has scared sweet sleep away,
And heaviness, that comes with night,
Departs not with the day ;
To meet the fond endearing smile,
That seeks, with false relief,
Awhile to calm his bursting heart—
This is a Father's grief.

To listen where her gentle voice
Its welcome music shed,
And find within his lonely halls
The silence of the dead ;
To look, unconsciously, for her,
The chosen and the chief
Of earthly joys—and look in vain—
This is a Father's grief.

To stand beside the sufferer's couch,
While life is ebbing fast ;
To mark that once illumined eye
With death's dull film o'ercast ;—
To watch the struggles of the frame
When earth has no relief,
And hopes to heaven are breathed in vain—
This is a Father's grief.

And not when that dread hour is past,
And life is pain no more—
Not when the dreary tomb hath closed
O'er her so loved before,
Not then does kind oblivion come
To lend his woes relief,
But with him to the grave he bears
A Father's rooted grief.

For, Oh ! to dry a mother's tears,
Another babe may bloom :
But what remains on earth for him
Whose last is in the tomb ?
To think his child is blest above—
To hope their parting brief,—
These, these may soothe—but death alone
Can heal a Father's grief.

THE DEATH BELL.

[ANONYMOUS.]

TOLL on, toll on !

A son of man is passing to his rest,
A wayward child hath sought its parent breast :
Toll on, toll on !

Bear on the dead :

On the dark bier the home-come wanderer lies ;
Dimm'd is the lustre of those rayless eyes,
Their light is fled.

On, slowly on :

The varying dreams of love, of pride, of power ;
The aspiring hopes of many a lofty hour,
With him are gone.

Tread soft and light :

That palsied heart no more with life is warm,
The quick'ning essence from that silent form
Hath wing'd its flight !

Look on him now :

The cold, still torpor of the ice-bound wave,
The chilling signet of the opening grave,
Is on that brow.

But on, toll on

A struggling spirit is at length unbound—
A wearied pilgrim hath a resting found :
Toll on, toll on !

Voice of the tomb !

A thousand hearts thy awful notes have stirr'd,
A thousand years thy deep-toned summons heard
Sound forth the doom,

“ Man, thou must die !”

So, prophet-like, would seem the fearful knell
To the chill'd heart th' unerring fate to tell,

“ All, all must die !”

Stern tolls thy chime ;

The funeral herald of the warrior brave,
Whom glory's halo lighteth to the grave
In life's full prime.

WHERE IS MY GRAVE?

[CHURCH OF ENGLAND MAGAZINE.]

WHERE is my grave ? Mid the silent dead
Of the churchyard throng shall I lay my head ?
Shall I sleep in peace, amid those who erst,
In happier years, my childhood nurst—
With them beneath the same green sod,
My soul with theirs gone to meet its God ?

Where is my grave ? In the vasty deep,
'Mid the treasures of ocean's caves, shall I sleep ?
With those who slept there ages before,
Far from their loved and their native shore ;
The sand my bed, and the rocks my pillow,
And cradled to rest by the tossing billow ?

Where is my grave ? Are its dark folds spread
On the field of the bloody, the dying, and dead ;
Where fiercely the rush of the war-steed pass'd,
Where freedom hath fought and hath breathed her last,
And the foe and the friend one common bed share,—
Shall my place of repose be there, be there ?

Where is my grave ? 'Neath some foreign sky
Shall I lay down my wearied limbs and die ?
Far over mountain, and far over wave,
Shall the wild-flowers bloom on my lonely grave,
In the land of the stranger, where none are near
To breathe the soft sigh, and to shed the sad tear ?

Where is my grave ? In the burning sand
Of Afric's bright and sultry land
Shall I sleep, when my toil and my labour are o'er,
A weary shepherd on that far shore ;
With no record to tell, save the cross by my side,
Of what faith I had preach'd, in what hope I had died ?

Where is my grave ? It matters not where !
But my home beyond,—is it there, is it there,
Where cherubims spread their golden wings,
And where seraph to seraph triumphant sings :
In the sun-bright regions of the blest,
Shall there be my home, my eternal rest ?

WRITTEN IN A GRAVE-YARD.

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.]

A SWEET and soothing influence breathes around
The dwellings of the dead. Here on this spot,
Where countless generations sleep forgot,
Up from the marble tomb and grassy mound
There cometh on my ear a peaceful sound,
That bids me be contented with my lot,
And suffer calmly. Oh! when passions hot,
When rage or envy doth my bosom wound;
Or wild designs—a fair deceiving train—
Wreathed in their flowery fetters me enslave;
Or keen misfortune's arrowy tempests roll
Full on my naked head.—Oh! then again
May those still, peaceful accents of the grave,
Arise, like slumbering music on my soul.

THE CHURCHYARD.

[WORDSWORTH.]

THIS file of Infants; some that never breathed,
And the besprinkled Nursling, unrequired
Till he begins to smile upon the breast
That feeds him; and the tottering Little-one
Taken from air and sunshine when the rose
Of Infancy first blooms upon his cheek,

The thinking, thoughtless School-boy, the bold Youth
Of soul impetuous, and the bashful Maid
Smitten while all the promises of life
Are opening round her ; those of middle age
Cast down while confident in strength they stand,
Like pillars fix'd more firmly, as might seem,
And more secure, by very weight of all
That for support rests on them ; the decay'd
And burthensome ; and lastly, that poor few
Whose light of reason is with age extinct ;
The hopeful and the hopeless, first and last,
The earliest summon'd and the longest spared,
Are here deposited, with tribute paid
Various ; but unto each some tribute paid ;
As if, amid these peaceful hills and groves,
Society were touch'd with kind concern,
And gentle " Nature grieved that One should die."

FUNERAL DIRGE.

[REV. THOMAS DALE.]

DEAR as thou wert, and justly dear,
We will not weep for thee :
One thought shall check the starting tear,
It is—that thou art free.
And thus shall Faith's consoling power
The tears of love restrain ;
Oh ! who that saw thy parting hour,
Could wish thee here again ?

Triumphant in thy closing eye,
The hope of glory shone,
Joy breathed in thine expiring sigh,
To think the fight was won.
Gently the passing spirit fled,
Sustain'd by grace divine ;
Oh ! may such grace on me be shed,
And make my end like thine.

THE ETERNAL SHORE.

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.]

THE lake lay hid in mist, and to the sand
The little billows hastening silently,
Came sparkling on, in many a gladsome band,
Soon as they touch'd the shore, all doom'd to die.
I gazed upon them with a pensive eye,
For on that dim and melancholy strand,
I saw the image of man's destiny.
So hurry we right onwards thoughtlessly,
Unto the coast of that Eternal Land,
Where, like the worthless billows in their glee,
The first faint touch unable to withstand,
We melt at once into eternity.
Thou who weighest the waters in thine hand,
My awe-struck spirit puts her trust in thee.

THE SAINTED DEAD.

[REV. C. STRONG.]

HERE, where the night-breeze moans like a
distant knell,
I would hold converse with my kindred dead,
And shape them to mine eye, as when they fled
To the pure clime where righteous spirits dwell.

Imagination, work thy mightiest spell—
My sire appears; light such as sunbeams shed
On vernal showers enwreaths his sainted head;
He seems to say, Son! guard thy mother well.

isters! ye too do leave your heaven awhile,
For this brief moment surely were ye spared,
To teach me how above the angels smile:

Brothers! with whom life's joys and pains were
shared,
I mark the import of that warning style,
Lips never plainlier spake—'Be thou prepared.'

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD.

[MRS. SIGOURNEY.]

THEY dread no storm that lowers,
No perish'd joys bewail;
They pluck no thorn-clad flowers,
Nor drink of streams that fail.

There is no tear-drop in their eye,
Nor change upon their brow ;
The placid bosom heaves no sigh,
Though all earth's idols bow.

Who are so greatly bless'd ?
From whom hath sorrow fled ?
Who find such deep unbroken rest,
While all things toil?—The dead !
The holy dead ! Why weep ye so
Above their sable bier ?
Thrice blessed ! they have done with woe ;
The living claim the tear.

We dream, but they awake ;
Dark visions mar our rest ;
Mid thorns and snares our way we take,
And yet we mourn the bless'd :
For those who throng th' eternal throne,
Lost are the tears we shed—
They are the living, they alone,
Whom thus we call the dead.

SLEEPING IN JESUS.

[THE AMETHYST, 1838.]

A SLEEP in Jesus ! blessed sleep !
From which none ever wake to weep ;
A calm and undisturb'd repose,
Unbroken by the last of foes.

Asleep in Jesus! Oh! how sweet
To be for such a slumber meet;
With holy confidence to sing
That death has lost his venom'd sting!

Asleep in Jesus! peaceful rest!
Whose waking is supremely blest;
No fear, no woe, shall dim that hour
That manifests the Saviour's power.

Asleep in Jesus! Oh! for me
May such a blissful refuge be;
Securely shall my ashes lie,
Waiting the summons from on high.

Asleep in Jesus! time, nor space,
Debars this precious "hiding place."
On Indian plains, or Lapland snows,
Believers find the same repose.

Asleep in Jesus! far from thee
Thy kindred and their graves may be;
But thine is still a blessed sleep,
From which none ever wake to weep.

MAN IMMORTAL.

[MISS HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.]

WHEN all yon planets in their ample spheres
Have wing'd their course, and roll'd their
destined years;
When the vast sun shall veil his golden light
Deep in the gloom of everlasting night;

When wild, destructive flames shall wrap the skies,
 When Chaos triumphs, and when Nature dies ;
 Man shall alone the wreck of worlds survive,
 Midst falling spheres, immortal man shall live !
 The voice which bade the last dread thunders roll,
 Shall whisper to the good, and cheer their soul.
 God shall himself his favour'd creature guide,
 Where living waters pour their blissful tide,
 Where the enlarged, exulting, wondering mind
 Shall soar, from weakness and from guilt refined ;
 Where perfect knowledge, bright with cloudless rays,
 Shall gild eternity's unmeasured days ;
 Where friendship, unembitter'd by distrust,
 Shall in immortal bands unite the just ;
 Devotion raised to rapture breathe her strain,
 And Love in his eternal triumph reign.

IMMORTAL LIFE.

[ANONYMOUS.]

“ **L**IFE shall spring out of death.” Oh, with that
 sound,
 Spirit of peace ! thou spread'st thy radiant wing,
 Earth's broken garlands, scatter'd o'er the ground,
 Bloom forth afresh, as in the dawn of spring.
 O sons of earth ! ye who so oft would twine
 Her fading blossoms with your hopes divine,
 Cast, cast those wreaths aside ; one hope alone
 Will bloom when all is faded, lost, and gone
 To cheer thee in life's latest parting breath,
 And whisper peace. “ Life shall spring out of death ! ”

IMMORTALITY.

[DANA.]

AND with our frames do perish all our loves ?
Do those that take their root, and put forth buds
And their soft leaves, unfolded in the warmth
Of mutual hearts, grow up and live in beauty,
Then fade and fall, like fair unconscious flowers ?
Are thoughts and passions that to the tongue give
speech,
And make it send forth winning harmonies,—
That to the cheek do give its living glow,
And vision in the eye the soul intense
With that for which there is no utterance,—
Are these the body's accidents ?—no more
To live in it, and, when that dies, go out
Like the burnt taper's flame ?

O listen, man !

A voice within us speaks that startling word,
“ Man, thou shalt never die ! ” Celestial voices
Hymn it unto our souls ; according harps,
By angel fingers touch'd, when the mild stars
Of morning sang together, sound forth still
The song of our great immortality ;
Thick-clustering orbs, and this our fair domain,
The tall, dark mountains, and the deep-toned seas,
Join in this solemn, universal song.
O, listen ye, our spirits ! drink it in
From all the air ! 'Tis in the gentle moonlight ;

P

Tis floating 'midst day's setting glories ; Night,
Wrapp'd in her sable robe, with silent step
Comes to our bed, and breathes it in our ears :
Night, and the dawn, bright day, and thoughtful eve,
All time, all bounds, the limitless expanse,
As one vast mystic instrument, are touch'd
By an unseen, living Hand, and conscious chords
Quiver with joy in this great jubilee.
The dying hear it, and, as sounds of earth
Grow dull and distant, wake their passing souls
To mingle in this heavenly harmony.

GOD, THE EVERLASTING LIGHT OF THE
BLESSED.

[DODDRIDGE.]

YE golden lamps of heaven, farewell,
With all your feeble light !
Farewell, thou ever-changing moon,
Pale empress of the night !

And thou, refulgent orb of day,
In brighter flames array'd,
My soul, that springs beyond thy sphere,
No more demands thine aid.

Ye stars are but the shining dust
Of my divine abode,
The pavement of those heavenly courts
Where I shall reign with God.

The Father of eternal light
Shall there his beams display,
Nor shall one moment's darkness mix
With that unvaried day.

No more the drops of piercing grief
Shall swell into mine eyes,
Nor the meridian sun decline
Amidst those brighter skies.

There all the millions of his saints
Shall in one song unite,
And each the bliss of all shall view
With infinite delight.

“ WEEP FOR YOURSELVES! AND FOR
YOUR CHILDREN.”

[MRS. SIGOURNEY.]

WE mourn for those who toil—
The slave who ploughs the main,
Or him who hopeless tills the soil
Beneath the stripe and chain ;
For those whom, in the world's hard race
O'er-wearied and unblest,
A host of restless phantoms chase,—
Why mourn for those who rest ?

We mourn for those who sin,
Bound in the tempter's snare,
Whom syren Pleasure beckons in
To prisons of despair ;

Whose hearts, by whirlwind passions torn,
Are wrecked on folly's shore ;
But why in sorrow should we mourn
For those who sin no more ?

We mourn for those who weep,
Whom stern afflictions bend,
With anguish o'er the lowly sleep
Of lover or of friend ;
But they to whom the sway
Of pain and grief is o'er,
Whose tears our God hath wiped away—
Oh mourn for them no more !

RESIGNATION.

[NORRIS, OF BEMERTON.]

SINCE 'tis thy sentence I should part
With the most precious treasure of my heart,
I freely that and more resign,
My heart itself, as its delight, is thine ;
My little all I give to thee,
Thou gav'st a greater gift, thy Son to me

Take all, great God, I will not grieve
But still will wish that I had still to give ;
I hear thy voice, thou bidst me quit
My paradise ; I bless and do submit ;
I will not murmur at thy word,
Nor beg thy angel to sheath up his sword.

TRUST IN GOD.

[LANGHORNE.]

THROUGH Error's maze, through Folly's night,
The lamp of Reason lends me light:
When stern Affliction waves her rod,
My heart confides in thee, my God!
When Nature shrinks opprest with woes,
Ev'n then she finds in thee repose.
To thee my humble voice I raise:
Forgive, while I presume to praise.

Affliction flies, and Hope returns:
Her lamp with brighter splendour burns;
And Love, with all his smiling train,
And Peace and Joy are here again;
These, these, I know, 'twas thine to give:
I trusted; and behold, I live!
To thee my humble voice I raise:
Forgive, while I presume to praise.

Oh! may I still thy favour prove!
Still grant me Gratitude and Love,
Let Truth and Virtue guard my heart;
Nor Love, nor Hope, nor Joy depart;
But yet, whate'er my life may be,
My heart shall still repose on thee.
To thee my humble voice I raise:
Forgive, while I presume to praise.

UNMURMURING SUBMISSION.

[REV. C. STRONG.]

PASSING the inclosure where the dead repose
I saw, in sable weeds, a gentle pair
Lingering with fond regard at evening's close,
Beside a little grave fresh swelling there :

Silent they stood---serene their thoughtful air ;
There fell no tear, no vain complaint arose ;
Faith seem'd to prompt the unutterable prayer,
And to their view the eternal home disclose.

Next Sabbath brought me where the flow'ret lay,
Record of high descent the marble bore,
Heir of a noble house, and only stay ;

And these words, gather'd from the Bible's store—
“ The Lord hath given, the Lord hath ta'en away,
His holy name be blessed evermore !”

AS THY DAY IS, SO SHALL THY
STRENGTH BE.

[MRS. SIGOURNEY.]

WHEN adverse winds and waves arise,
And in my heart despondence sighs,---
When life her throng of care reveals,
And weakness o'er my spirit steals,---
Grateful I hear the kind decree—
That “ as my day, my strength shall be.”

When with sad footsteps memory roves
Mid smitten joys, and buried loves,---
When sleep my tearful pillow flies,
And dewy morning drinks my sighs,---
Still to thy promise, Lord, I flee,
That "as my day, my strength shall be."

One trial more must yet be past ;
One pang---the keenest and the last :
And when, with brow convulsed and pale,
My feeble, grieving heart-strings fail,
Oh Father ! grant my soul to see
That "as her day, her strength shall be."

THE END.

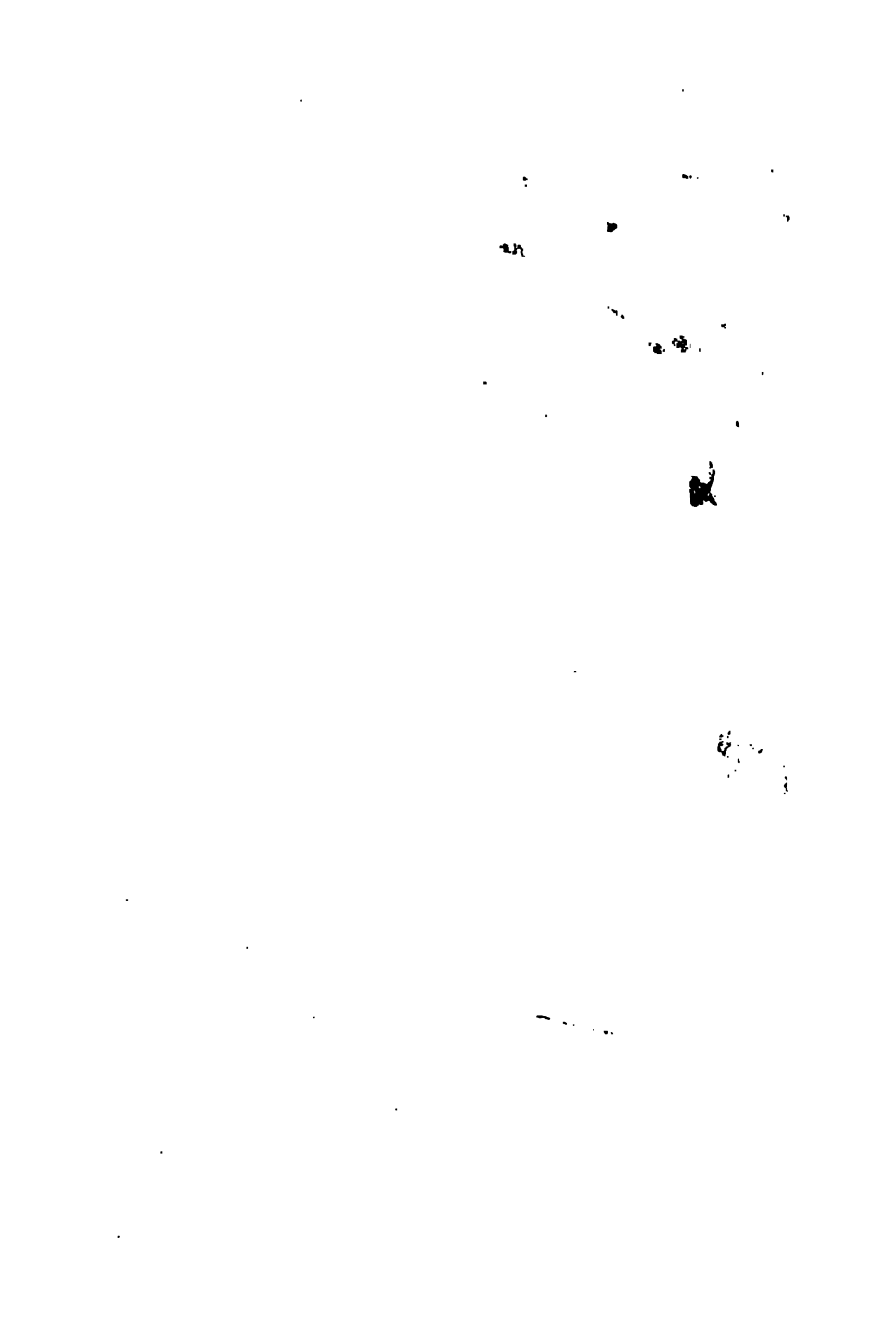
•

C. WHITTINGHAM, TOOKS COURT,
CHANCERY LANE.

ERRATUM.

Page 1, line 12, for counties, read countries.

•





11
12
13
14
15

